British Archaeology

THE VOICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY FOR 80 YEARS

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ISSUE 201

Chew Valley Hoard:

Coins of conquest, rebellion & anarchy

Excavating Thorney Hill: A 'Gypsy rehabilitation centre'

Archaeology: What is it good for?

Archaeological Achievement Awards 2024

80 YEARS | Council for British Archaeology

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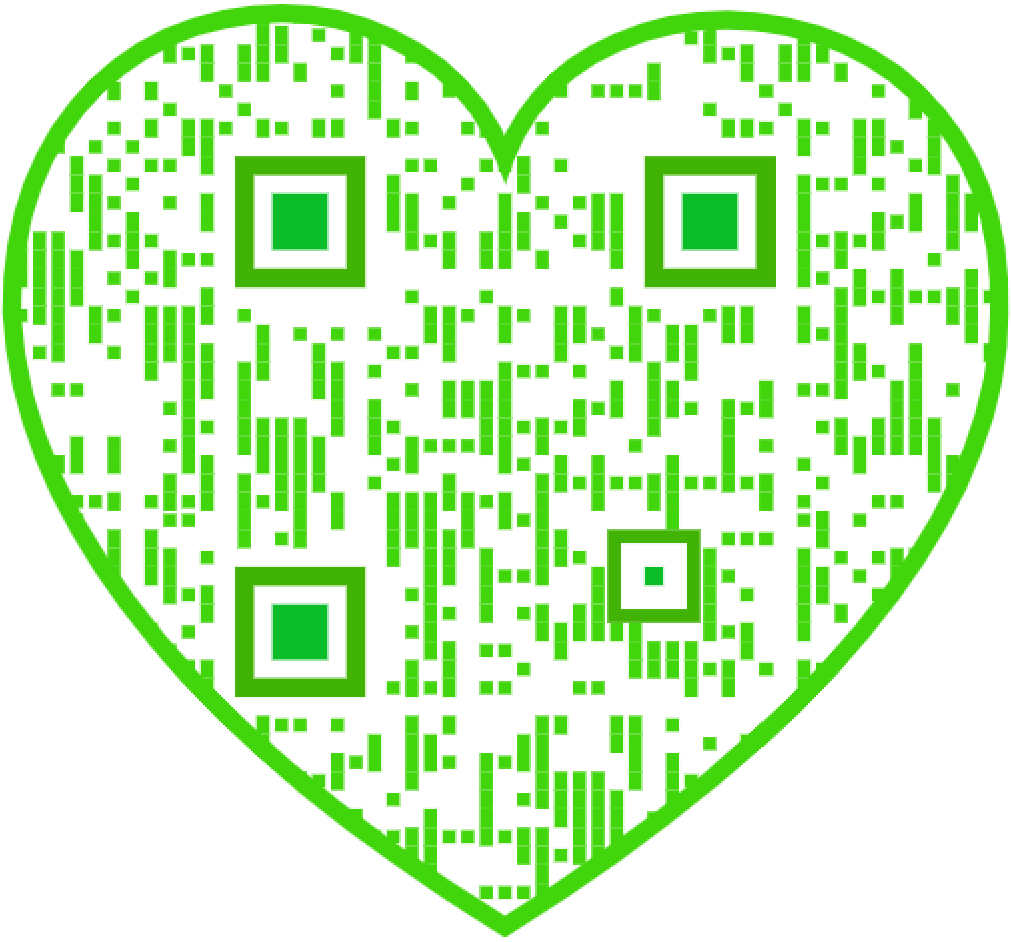

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Council for
British Archaeology

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Founded in 1944, the Council for British Archaeology promotes archaeology for all. It makes the case for safeguarding our archaeological heritage, and increasing public participation and understanding. It has a growing membership of individuals of all ages and over 600 organisations, and partnerships with Archaeology Scotland, CBA Wales/Cymru and CBA English Regional Groups. The CBA is an environmental charity registered in England & Wales (287815) and Scotland (SC041971), and a company limited by guarantee (1760254)

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From the editor

VOLTAGE TV

This past year in world history has been volatile. Sometimes it is easier to glance from afar rather than to face the realities of conflicts and the impacts they can have on yourself, your families, friends, and colleagues.

Up until a few days ago, the intention of this *British Archaeology* issue (201) was to also include an article from archaeological colleagues based at the Getty Museum. As with other archaeological professionals in the past year, whose lives have been threatened in Ukraine and Gaza, our colleagues in LA have also had to abandon their homes – not by the cruelties of war – but by the ravages of wildfires and the increasing human impact on our environment. We are hoping to publish their work in a future edition, but I extend my best wishes to them as I do to others who are suffering in various conflicts around the world.

By coincidence, this edition of *British Archaeology* shows us how people in the past and present respond and react to external forces, have the power to coerce, and can also collectively be a change for good. On the surface, the discovery of the Chew Valley Hoard is an impressive find of 2,584 silver pennies – the largest coin hoard to be found deposited in the ground from just after the Norman Conquest in 1066.

As with all hoard discoveries, I am always astonished at the amount of information that can be gleaned from seemingly isolated buried items; the diligent work of the Portable Antiquities Scheme and local museum partners – in this case, South West Heritage Trust paint a vivid picture of England and the borders of Wales during a tumultuous time of political upheaval and structural change during the initial years of William the Conquerors reign.

In the summer of 2024, Romani Community Archaeology embarked on their inaugural field season. In the calm idyll of the New Forest, archaeologists and volunteers uncovered the shocking story of the Thorney Hill Gypsy community. Targeted by authorities, they were systematically cleared from the land and forced to 'assimilate' in dire conditions. Excavating Thorney Hill Gypsy Rehabilitation Centre is a brutal story of our recent past, this excavation highlights how archaeology can be used as a means to understand the uncomfortable social history of Britain's marginalised communities, with the opportunity to educate others and offer some form of closure to affected communities.

Our final feature, *Archaeology: What is it good for?* is a reminder how archaeology permeates our lives and how archaeological research influences growth in other industries and sectors. A reminder that archaeology is now not just about putting a spade in the ground but that as a practice enjoyed by professional or volunteers alike it has grown exponentially.

Archaeological discoveries now have wider implications for global humanities and science and how individually, in our own ways, we can contribute to a reimagined archaeological future. You can contact the magazine via email at editor@archaeologyuk.org.

Raksha Dave

On the cover: A pile of silver coins from the Chew Valley Hoard following conservation. The coins were issued by three English kings spanning the pre- and post-Norman conquest

Credit: British Museum

Radiocarbon dates

Unless otherwise noted, ^{14}C dates in *British Archaeology* are calibrated at 95% confidence (cal AD or cal BC, expressed as AD or BC), rounded out after Mook (1986). See Radio-carbon dating by M Christie *et al*, *WikiJournal of Science* (2018), DOI: 10.15347/wjs/2018.006

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FIRST SIGHT

A tiny saucer from a child's tea set excavated from Thorney Hill, Hampshire, the site of a Gypsy Rehabilitation Centre

FIRST SIGHT IMAGE: ESZTER HALASI

This issue's contributors include

Professor Michael Lewis is the head of the Portable Antiquities Scheme, which was established to record archaeological finds discovered by the public in England and Wales.

JOHN-HENRY PHILLIPS

John-Henry Phillips is an archaeologist from a Romani background and gives his personal perspective on what it means to be Romani and working in archaeology today.

TOM WESTHEAD

Dr Stuart Eve is a professional archaeologist, and CEO of Wessex Archaeology, he provides the archaeological context and initial results from fieldwork undertaken in September 2024.

SWHT

Amal Khreisheh is the curator of Archaeology at the South West Heritage Trust. The Chew Valley coin hoard was successfully acquired for the nation by the trust with plans to display the hoard permanently at The Museum of Somerset.

KYE PRESTON

Kye Preston is an undergraduate history student at Southampton University and direct descendant of one of the families housed at Thorney Hill.

SEAMUS RYAN

Dr Sadie Watson is a senior research fellow at MOLA, a leading practitioner in field archaeology, and in 2019 was selected as a UKRI future leader fellow researching the public benefit of government infrastructure investment in archaeology.

awards

Archaeological Achievement Awards 2024

Top right: The awards ceremony took place at the Temple of Peace in Cardiff

The 2024 Archaeological Achievement Awards were held on 22November at the Temple of Peace in Cardiff.

The Awards aim to celebrate the best in archaeology in the UK and Ireland and to recognise outstanding projects, teams, and individuals making a transformative impact in the sector with creativity, passion, and innovation.

This is the fourth year the awards have been organised by the Council for British Archaeology (CBA), and we were delighted to head to Wales for this edition of the awards.

The evening opened with an address by Jack Sargeant, Minister for Culture, Skills, and Social Partnership in the Welsh Government and a Member of the Senedd, emphasising the power of archaeology to connect communities, shape cultural identity, and inspire young people to engage with their heritage.

The keynote lecture was given by Jane Henderson, Professor of Conservation at Cardiff University. Jane challenged us to rethink traditional views of preservation, advocating for a shift from gatekeeping to co-creation.

Her inspiring talk explored how embracing the imperfect, the vulnerable, and evolving practice in heritage can foster greater inclusivity and engagement within archaeology. Jane reinforced the importance of archaeology, heritage, and culture to us all: "In times of crisis and in times of contentment heritage and culture play a vital role in us understanding our humanity.

Making the case for Conservation is about demonstrating the value it offers to improve lives individually and collectively."

The keynote lecture was given by Jane Henderson, Professor of Conservation at Cardiff University

The ceremony was hosted by local Welsh poet and literary activist Rufus Mufasa, who energised the audience with her vibrant presence.

To conclude the event, she delivered a powerful, original poem inspired by the evening's themes of archaeology, art, and community. We are incredibly grateful to Jane and Rufus for ensuring the evening ran smoothly and for inspiring us to think about our actions and impacts.

Over the course of the next few pages we give a summary of the winners and highly commended nominations. Below are details on how you can find out more about all the shortlisted entries.

Congratulations

The CBA and the judging panel would like to offer their congratulations to all the 2024 shortlisted nominees. The extraordinary range of projects and individuals nominated demonstrate the hard work, passion, and creativity that make archaeology accessible to everyone.

James Kyle, chair of judges and Laura Hampden, vice-chair of judges shared their thoughts on the 2024 awards: "Year after year the incredible projects and individuals nominated for these awards exceed our expectations as judges. The current crop of nominees continues to push the boundaries of our discipline, showing us that archaeology has the power to inspire collaboration, to embrace diversity, to champion inclusivity, and to push for equity.

"Those themes rightly deserve celebration and recognition, and they are at the very heart of the Archaeological Achievement Awards."

Right: Rufus Mufasa, poet and host of the awards ceremony

We would also like to express our gratitude to all of the judges for their time and commitment to the awards.

Finally, we would also like to thank all the funders and sponsors of the awards for enabling us to deliver the awards scheme and celebrate the best of archaeology across the UK and Ireland. Nominations for the 2025 Archaeological Achievement Awards will open on Saturday 19 July and the awards ceremony will be held at the Great Hall, Queens University Belfast in November 2025.

Find out more about the 2024 shortlisted nominees and look out for guidance on how to apply for this year's awards: https://www.archaeologyuk.org/our-work/archaeology-awards.html. ■

Outstanding Achievement Award

Sponsored by

Winner: Bryn Celli Ddu Public Archaeology Project

Council for British Archaeology

Left: Representatives of Bryn Celli Ddu Public Archaeology Project, winners of the Outstanding Achievement Award, with Gwilym Hughes from Cadw, sponsors of the award

The Outstanding Achievement Award shortlist is comprised of the winners of all the other award categories. The judges felt that Bryn Celli Ddu Public Archaeology Project was a fantastic example of a co-produced project, and great efforts were made to engage the participants.

It was very well resourced and professionally organised, a range of experiences for participants, which were strongly embedded in the project, with volunteers being heavily involved throughout the creative process.

Overall, this was a very strong, exemplary project with a great legacy and sustainability, which clearly engaged the whole community and on a limited budget.

Archaeology and Sustainability

Sponsored by

Winner: Fair Game

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Representatives from Fair Game, winners of the Archaeology and Sustainability Award, with Catherine McGrath of National Highways, sponsors of the award

This award celebrates how archaeology addresses issues around sustainability. This can include the contribution of archaeology to sustainable development or approaches to making archaeological projects more sustainable.

Projects should demonstrate how they are addressing the aspirations of the UN Sustainability Goals. The criteria are:

- The project addresses at least one of the UN Sustainability Goals
- The project shows leadership and commitment to developing a sustainable future for archaeology

Winner: Fair Game:

Fair Game: Valuing the bio-cultural heritage of fallow deer and their venison for food security, sustainable woodlands, and biodiversity, demonstrates how archaeological research can provide solutions to contemporary challenges.

Fair Game articulates medieval-style principles and archaeological evidence of fallow deer management, processing and venison redistribution, to transform public understanding and sector partnerships and approaches to deer management, creating positive outcomes for biodiversity, climate action, and food justice.

The judges loved this project because it addressed so many angles, not just meeting the conventional sustainability criteria in a highly innovative way, but by tackling food insecurity it went to the heart of issues of inequality and disadvantage.

A collaborative approach drew people in from across the local area, and the revisiting of traditional farming methods tied it all back into sustainable but reliable food production.

Others shortlisted:

- 1000 Fingerprints 1000 Voices, The Scottish Crannog Centre

Public Dissemination or Presentation

Winner: JustALittleRoo

Above: Rosie Crawford, creator of JustALittleRoo, winner of the Public Dissemination or Presentation Award with James Kyle, chair of judges

This broad category can include books and publications, exhibitions, films, social media, or presentations. It can relate to a specific site, artefact, place, or a wider landscape.

The criteria are:

- Accessibility to diverse audiences
- Enhances public understanding
- Creative and innovative design and production
- Multi-format outputs, where appropriate

Winner: JustALittleRoo

JustALittleRoo is a free, online access and outreach platform, designed to demystify the transition to higher education as a lower income student, and widen participation in archaeology and related fields.

Since 2016, JustALittleRoo has provided free, internationally available careers resources, research tips, insider-views of archaeology, and mini-lectures on archaeological topics.

The judges felt that JustALittleRoo is a great example of how a small and targeted project can have such a big social impact and bring archaeology to new audiences.

Highly commended: Sad Girl Archaeology

Sad Girl Archaeology is a digital initiative focused on democratising archaeological knowledge through social media platforms. It shifts the narrative from purely academic interpretations to a more emotive and accessible understanding of archaeology.

Highly commended: Kilmartin Museum's New Permanent Exhibition

Following a £7.8M redevelopment, KilmartinpMuseum's new permanent exhibition offers visitors of all ages a fascinating and engaging insight into the lives of people who inhabited one of Scotland's most significant archaeological landscapes across 12,000 years.

Showcasing a nationally significant collection, it features artefacts from Kilmartin Glen and across Argyll.

Others shortlisted:

- Star Carr: Life after the Ice
- Must Farm Pile-Dwelling Settlement
- A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Road Improvement Schemn

Above: Sharon Webb (left) representing Kilmartin Museum's New permanent Eehibition, Stephanie Black creator of Sad Girl Archaeology (centre), with James Kyle (right), chair of judges. Both projects were highly commended in the Public Dissemination or Presentation Award

Watch the awards

The video of the awards ceremony and Jane Henderson's talk are available to watch via the CBA YouTube channel.

Use the QR code (right) or the link below to access the playlist.

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0jz2K7enTbRlWhOzA_2NFyby5HnDwhjr&si=WMH1-LXytX0VwCX-

The AV and livestreaming of the event was sponsored by Heneb, the new pan-Wales Trust for Welsh Archaeology which was formed on 1 April 2024 following the merger of the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts:

- Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust
- Dyfed Archaeological Trust
- Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust
- Gwynedd Archaeological Trust.

Find out more about their work here: www.heneb.org.uk.

Early Career Archaeologist

Winners: Kieran Manchip and Rosie Crawford

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Above: Kieran Manchip, one of the to winners of the Early Career Archaeologist Award, with Nathalie Cohen, President of the Royal Archaeological Institute, sponsors of the award, and Rufus Mufasa (right), host of the awards ceremony

This award highlights the contribution of an early career archaeologist. This could include contributions to archaeological work or research, dissemination, or a wider contribution to the workplace or a project.

For the purposes of this award, 'early career' is defined as an individual studying or undertaking entry level training, or in the first eight years of employment as an archaeologist.

This can be after a career break or career change and is not restricted by age. Nominations should demonstrate why the individual is considered an early career archaeologist.

The criteria are:

- Has made a demonstrable contribution either through a body of work over the last two years or through a specific piece of work
- Has developed their skills and knowledge
- Has shown leadership, commitment, and a passion for archaeology

Kieran Manchip

Kieran is a Project Officer at Archaeology Scotland where he leads several projects including New Audiences. Kieran studied archaeology and history at the University of Glasgow before undertaking a Master's in Conflict Archaeology.

He is passionate about the difference archaeology can make to peoples' lives and their communities.

The judges felt that Kieran was committed and passionate about engaging new and diverse audiences for Archaeology Scotland's work, and he has undoubtedly contributed to its success. Keiran has shown leadership by developing his skills in sensitivity to diverse cultural backgrounds, which he has then put into practice and shared in ways that are likely to have a lasting legacy.

Rosie Crawford

Rosie completed her undergraduate degree in Archaeology and Anthropology in 2019, her Master's in Forensic Archaeology and Anthropology in 2021, and began working in academic archaeology in 2022. Rosie set up JustALittleRoo, an online platform designed to demystify the transition to higher education.

The judges felt that Rosie's passion for making archaeology accessible comes through strongly in all she does. Rosie has demonstrated leadership through her use of YouTube, which clearly attracts a wide audience others can struggle to reach, including demystifying the university experience for students from low-income backgrounds.

Others shortlisted:

- Anna Giecco
- Laurie Matthews
- Stephanie Black

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Above: Rosie Crawford, one of the winners of the Early Career Archaeologist Award, with Nathalie Cohen, President of the Royal Archaeological Institute, sponsors of the award

Engagement and Participation

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UAUK
University Archaeology UK

Winner: Bryn Celli Ddu Public Archaeology Project

Above: Representatives of Bryn Celli Ddu Public Archaeology Project, winners of the Engagement and Participation Award, with Vicki Cummings (right), co-chair of University Archaeology UK, sponsors of the award

This award focuses on broadening participation in archaeology in all forms and is not limited to on-site delivery or activities.

Projects nominated can be on the ground or virtual, and engagement can be through a single event or a package of activities.

Emphasis should be on the quality of the participants' experience and the depth of engagement, rather than the number of people taking part.

We would like to know how the impact of the work has been evaluated and how you have responded to feedback from participants.

The criteria are:

- Offers high-quality engagement for participants
- Includes an element of co-production
- Volunteers are given opportunities to participate in delivery
- Sustainability and legacy are built into the project

Winner: Bryn Celli Ddu Public Archaeology Project

GWREIDDIAU (Roots) is the 10th year anniversary of the Bryn Celli Ddu public archaeology project.

It is a cross-disciplinary, outdoor arts and heritage project; an opportunity to respond to the Bryn Celli Ddu passage tomb through archaeological excavation, folklore, and performance; exploring its histories and ritual using a contemporary lens. The judges all agreed that the awards crosscutting themes of health & wellbeing and collaboration were both strongly supported and well explained in the nomination.

Highly commended: Diving into the Earl of Abergavenny

Diving into the Digital Archives of the Earl of Abergavenny was a project designed to develop digital skills among volunteers in the heritage sector.

Portland Museum used the archaeological finds from the 'Earl of Abergavenny' shipwreck to train volunteers in digital recording techniques and create a publicly accessible digital archive.

Highly commended: The Pendinas Hillfort Community Archaeology Project

The Pendinas Hillfort Project was created in response to the desire of members of the Penparcau community to learn more about their hillfort, a prominent landmark in the village, to encourage more visitors to discover its archaeology and wildlife, and to see the monument better maintained.

Others shortlisted:

- Welcome to the Scottish Crannog Centre
- Dig the Castle Project
- Digging for Erlestoke

Above: Representatives of Diving into the Earl of Abergavenny (left) and The Pendinas Hillfort Community Archaeology Project (right) with Vicki Cummings (right), co-chair of University Archaeology UK, sponsors of the award. Both projects were highly commended in the Engagement and Participation category

Learning, Training and Skills

Sponsored by AMS Archaeological Management Solutions

Winner: Irchester Field School

Above and below: Representatives of Irchester Field School, winners of the Learning, Training and Skills Award

This is an award to celebrate training, learning and skills across academic, public and commercial archaeology.

Nominations should demonstrate how the method of delivery moves beyond traditional lectures and presentations and utilises engaging learning mechanisms.

Nominations should show how the training or learning has sought and used feedback from participants to improve programme design and take into account user needs. The criteria are:

- Clearly evidenced need and target outcomes
- Demonstrates innovative delivery
- Incorporates engaging and/or inclusive learning
- Designed to deliver transferable skills and long-term impact and a culture of lifelong learning or CPD

Winner: Irchester Field School

This is an innovative collaboration between North Northants Council (at the Chester House Estate) and the University of Leicester, inspiring and empowering people of all ages to engage in life-enhancing opportunities focused on the small Roman town of Irchester, and the rich archaeology and heritage of the Nene Valley.

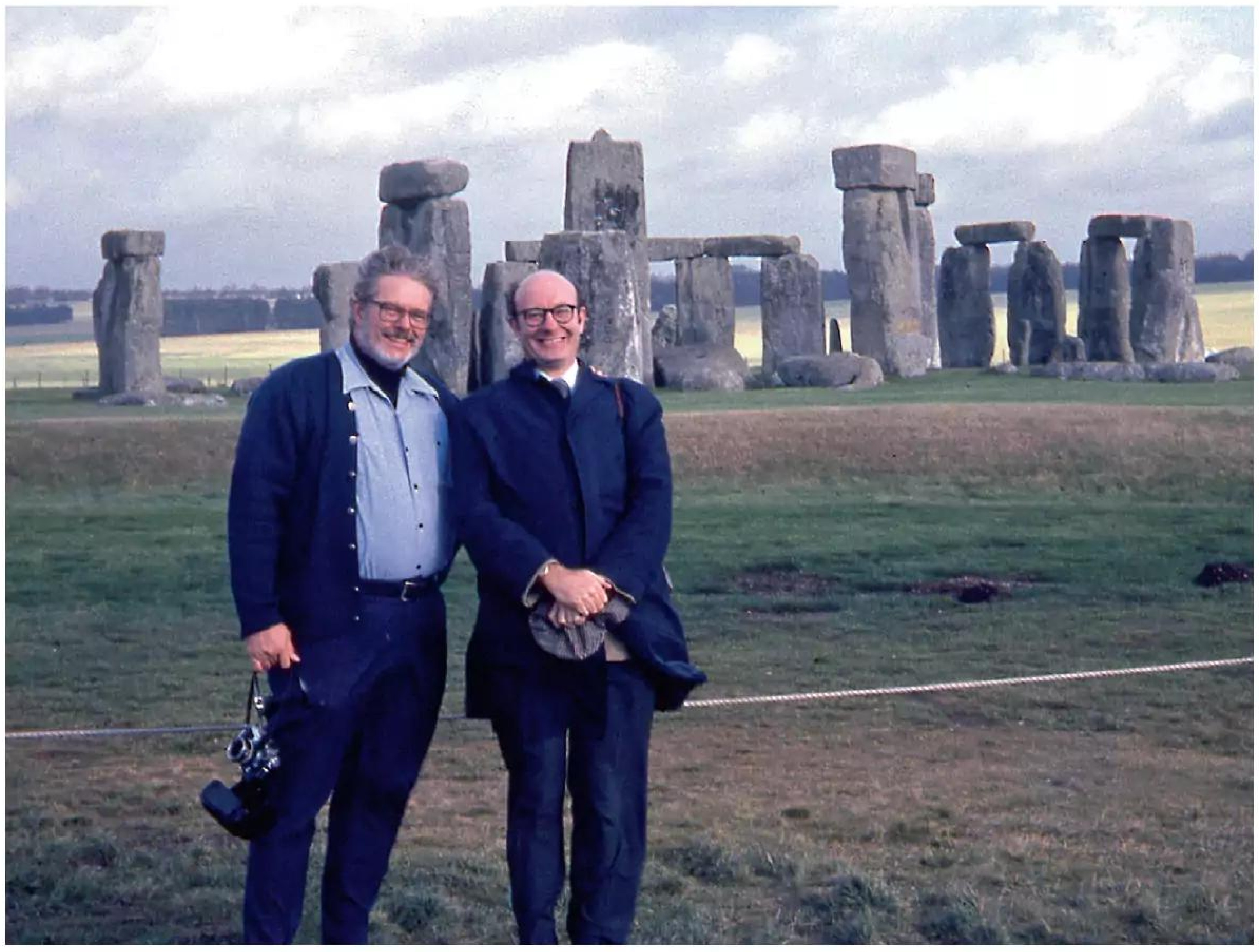
The judges agreed that Irchester Field School clearly touched the lives of many different people from school children to volunteers to professionals.

There was clear evidence of inspiring and empowering people, focused on the small Roman town of Irchester. Thousands of people benefited from this project, exemplifying and promoting the role and value of archaeology.

Others shortlisted:

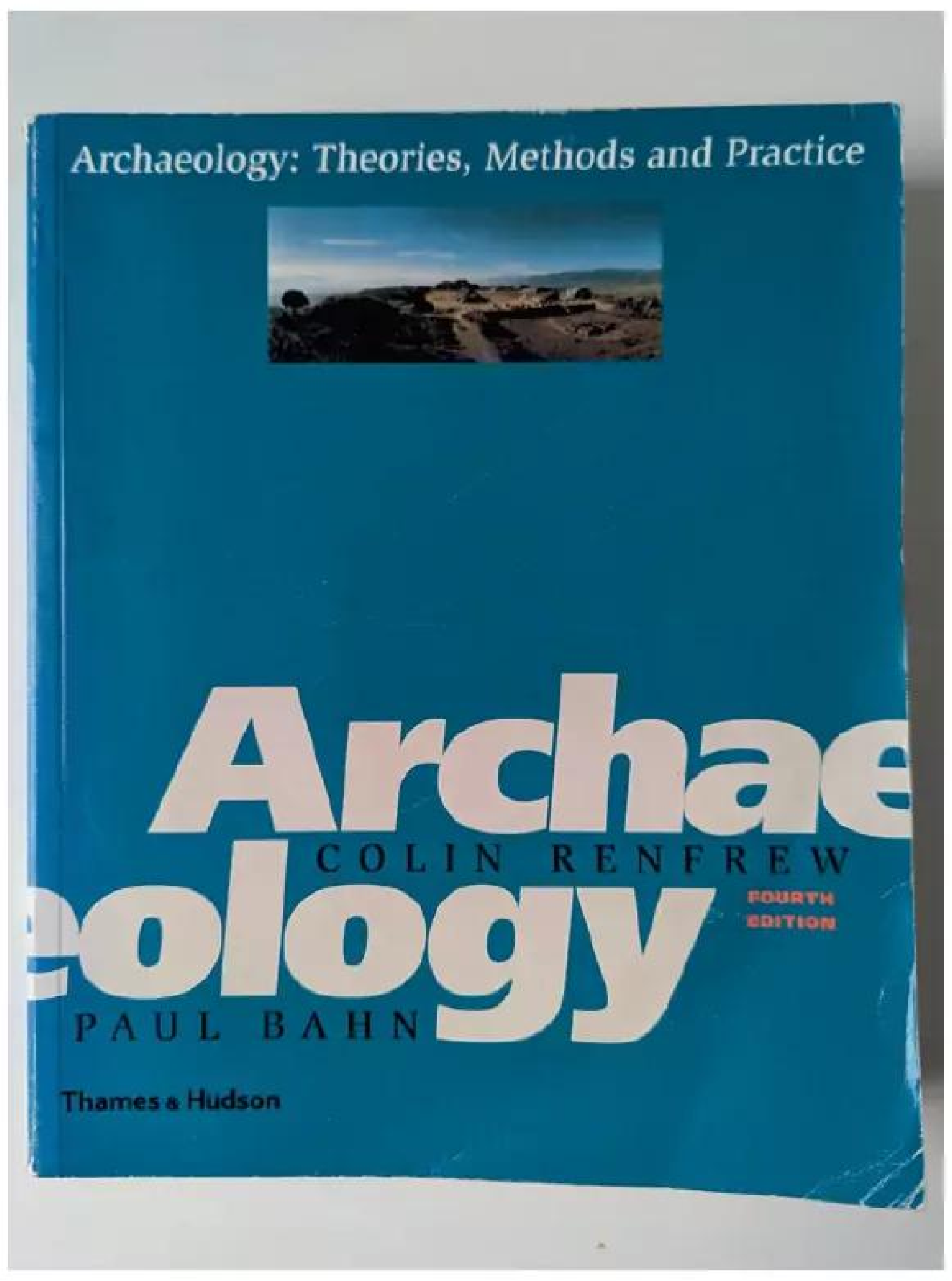
- Kids Dig York, York Archaeology
- Junior Archaeologist Excavation Experience

Obituary: Colin Renfrew



MIKE PITTS

Top: Colin Renfrew (right) with Lewis Binford, his American friend and sparring partner in the promotion of the New Archaeology, of which they were key drivers, at Stonehenge in 1980



Right: A well-thumbed 4th Edition copy of **Archaeology: Theories, Practice and Methods** *belonging to CBA staff member Jamie Corless*

In 2017, professor Colin Renfrew, Lord Renfrew of Kaimsthorn, spoke at the University of Chicago to celebrate the late Marija Gimbutas.

A titan in world archaeology, he addressed a question about which he and Gimbutas, famed for her vision of a goddess-worshipping ancient Europe, had disagreed: When and how had early Indo-European languages come to be shared between India and Ireland? He said that new DNA studies had – up to a point – proved him wrong, and vindicated his opponent.

It was a telling moment in an outstanding career in which Renfrew, who died in November, aged 87, tackled questions key to understanding who we are – how languages spread and how migration changes culture, why civilisations appear, how the human mind evolved, and what art means – with new evidence as well as argument.

The talk's location is indicative of his international reputation; his concession of his lack of vanity. But especially, it demonstrates his determination to address big issues about the past with science and data.

It was this that fired his enthusiastic embrace of new ideas and technologies, ahead of his rigidly humanistic colleagues in the 1960s, and his joy in directing excavations – once in Orkney, at the Quanterness burial mound, and in the Aegean.

It was this too that led him to campaign effectively against the illicit antiquities trade, which he said damaged ancient sites and tainted the objects, rendering both worthless – he admired the beauty of artefacts, but wanted them also to serve a greater quest for knowledge.

His curiosity and passion for archaeology led him to decline what could have been a career as a Conservative member of parliament.

However, in 1991 he accepted a life peerage, and for 30 years the Lords benefitted from his expertise in heritage politics, as he spoke up for academic freedom, became instrumental in Britain ratifying the Unesco convention on the illicit antiquities trade, and supported the Portable Antiquities Scheme when it most needed help. He co-chaired all-party parliamentary groups (APPGs) on archaeology and the protection of cultural heritage.

After studying archaeology at Cambridge University, Colin Renfrew took up a lectureship at Sheffield, then moved to Southampton, where he was Professor of Archaeology; TAG (the continuing Theoretical Archaeology Conference) began as a Sheffield-Southampton initiative at this time.

He returned to Cambridge as Disney Professor of Archaeology, Master of Jesus College (where he launched the Sculpture in the Close exhibition series), and founding-director of the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.

He was the expert on several BBC Chronicle films, and wrote or edited some 70 books. He will long continue to be known to archaeology students for Renfrew & Bahn, a fat text book co-authored with Paul Bahn first published in 1991 and now in its ninth edition.

Called *Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice*, it unashamedly prioritised the sciences, theories and assumptions – all, it seemed, ever-changing – underpinning understanding of the past over narratives of ancient civilisations, as useful to older professionals as new students.

On news of his death, Lina Mendoni, Greek culture minister, praised him for his work fighting antiquities smuggling and his "great legacy and innovative approaches".

He was elected fellow of both the Society of Antiquaries of London and of Scotland, and of the British Academy, among many other honours.

He is survived by his wife, Jane (neé Ewbank), an archaeologist and botanist, now emeritus fellow at Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge, whom he married in 1965 (Norman Lamont, later chancellor of the exchequer, was his best man), and their children Helena, Alban, and Magnus. ■

Mike Pitts

“Luxury” Roman Villa excavated by local community archaeologists in Wiltshire’s Chalke Valley

Volunteers have uncovered the first known Roman villa in south Wiltshire’s Chalke Valley during a two-week excavation led by Teffont Archaeology. The project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund through Cranborne Chase National Landscape’s Chase and Chalke Landscape Partnership Scheme, included over 60 volunteers who worked to excavate and record mosaics, painted wall plaster, and large stone buildings at the site.

The site was initially identified after local metal-detectorists reported a large number of Roman artefacts to the Portable Antiquities Scheme at Salisbury Museum.

Archaeologists were called in and further investigations revealed a 35m-long principal villa, alongside several additional buildings including a large bathhouse and a multi-storey barn, as well as an unusual concrete-floored structure which may have been an outdoor pool.

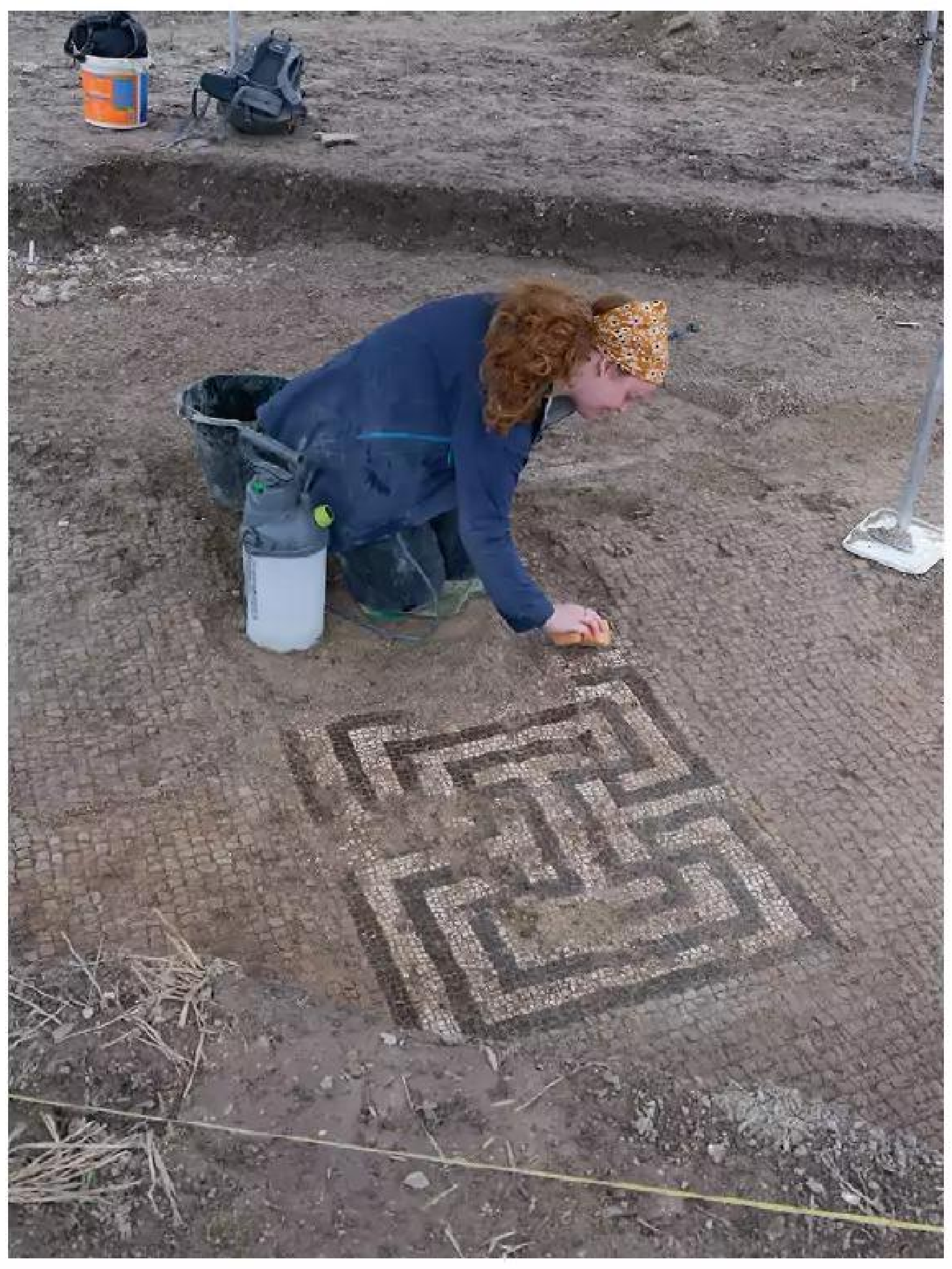
The project’s co-director, Dr David Roberts of Cardiff University, highlighted the local importance of the site, stating: “The site was likely the centre of a significant estate in the later Roman period, and its owners must have extracted a great deal of labour and surplus from the local farming communities to fund their luxury lifestyle.”

The intricate geometric mosaics and high-status furnishings, including painted wall plaster and columns, highlight the wealth and cultural sophistication of the villa’s residents.

Dr Denise Wilding of Teffont Archaeology noted: “These artefacts are especially significant due to the lack of recent excavations of high-status sites in this area.”

Rob Lloyd of Chase and Chalke praised the project’s impact: “Over the summer we’ve worked with Teffont Archaeology to provide hundreds of free volunteering opportunities in archaeology at two projects and have seen the immense difference these activities make to people’s wellbeing and engagement with their local heritage.”

Analysis of the finds is ongoing, with plans for talks and volunteer events at Salisbury Museum next year. ■

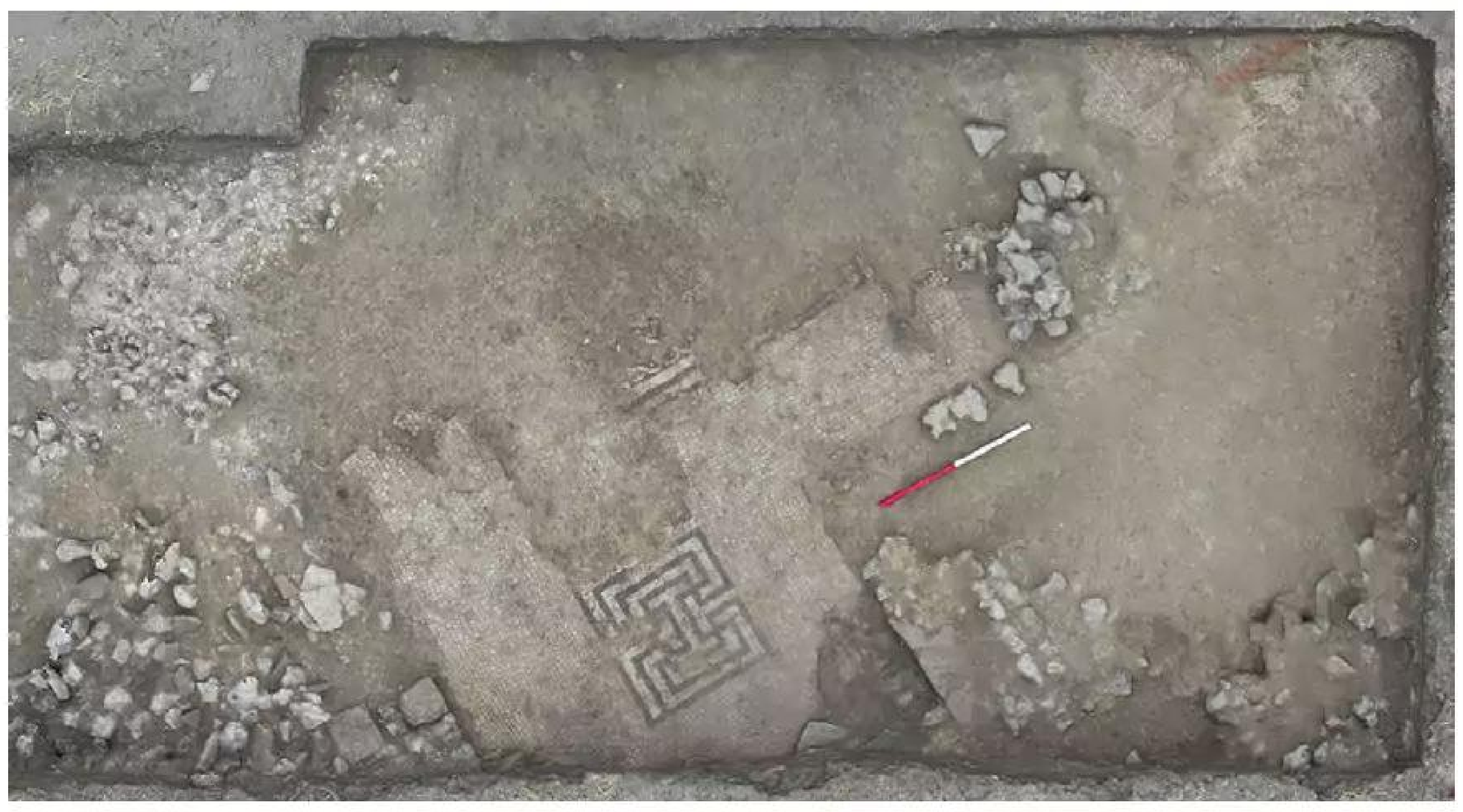


TEFFONT ARCHAEOLOGY [3]

***Top left:* Archaeologist cleaning mosaic**

***Left:* Volunteer recording hypocaust system**

***Below:* Rectified photo of Roman mosaics**



Free online documentary explores the lost history of Caludon Castle

A new documentary entitled *Lords of the Manor: The Lost History of Caludon Castle* has been released on YouTube, offering viewers a fascinating glimpse into the 800-year history of Caludon Castle, Coventry.

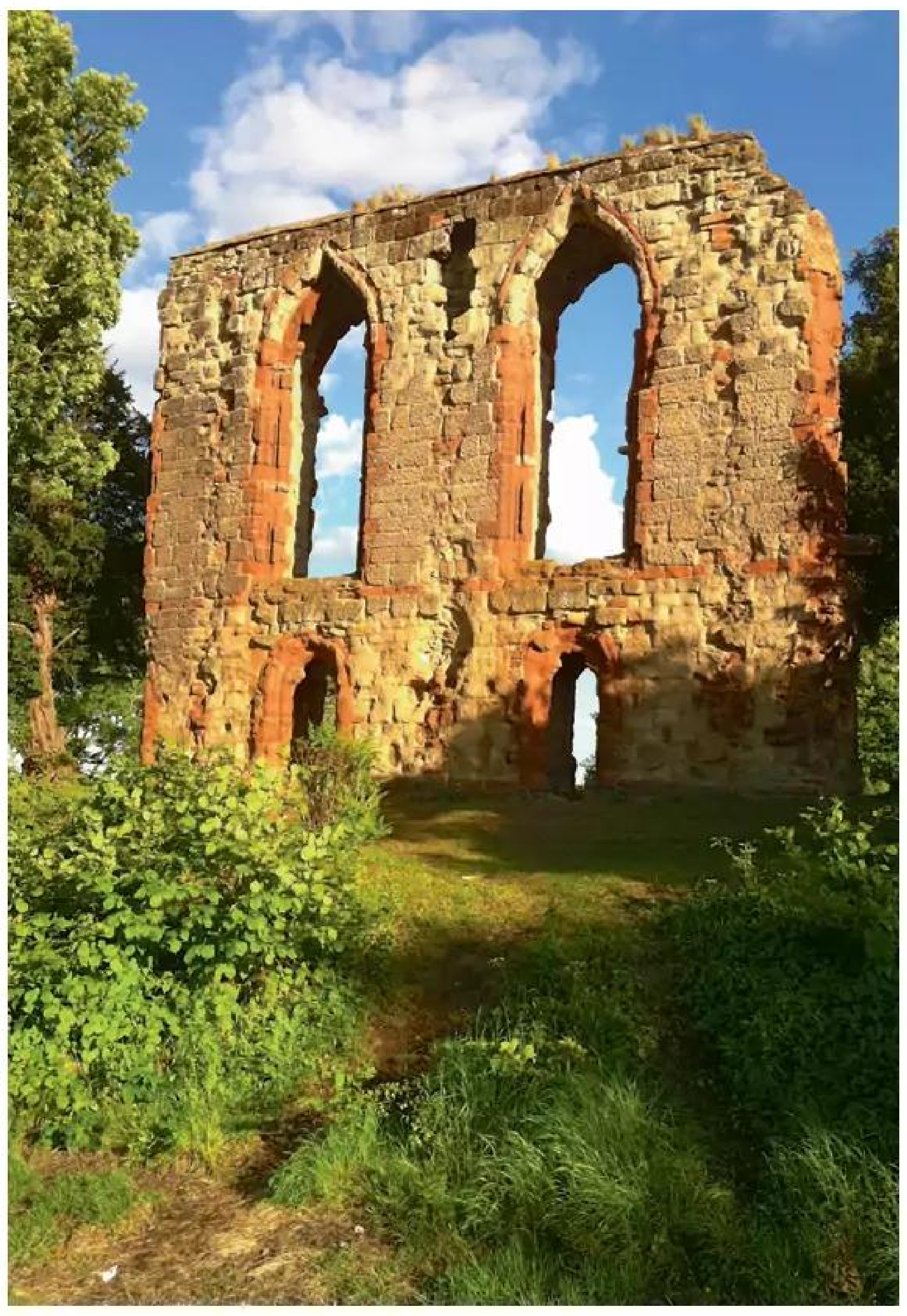
The 45-minute film, written and directed by local filmmaker Mark Ellis, delves into the castle’s origins, its connections to Shakespeare and Queen Elizabeth I, and its eventual decline. The documentary is available to watch free of charge on the Caludon Castle YouTube Channel.

Caludon Castle, now a Grade I listed building and scheduled ancient monument, was originally built in the early fourteenth century and owned by powerful families such as the Segraves, Mowbrays, and Berkeleys. Today, only a red sandstone wall of the Great Chambers remains, surrounded by the historic Caludon Park.

The film is based on John Clarke OBE’s book, *A History of Caludon Castle – The Lords of the Manor of Caludon*, and highlights Clarke’s lifelong mission to uncover the castle’s forgotten history.

Clarke commented: “We are delighted with the film, which takes the viewer on a journey over more than 800 years of history, from the original wooden manor house to the present day.”

Ellis added: “We’re really excited to be able to share the story of the rise, fall, and renaissance of Caludon Castle, and the role of John Clarke and his team in bringing it back into public consciousness.” ■



***Above:* The ruined wall at Caludon North from the north, taken from within the moat**

New project to investigate the origin of Scotland's earliest Neolithic tombs

GAVIN MACGREGOR, ARCHAEOLOGY SCOTLAND

Right: One of Scotland's earliest megalithic monuments

A groundbreaking new project will explore Scotland's Early Neolithic chambered and passage tombs, aiming to uncover precisely when these monuments were built and who constructed them. Supported by a £50,000 grant from the Audrey Henshall Legacy Fund, the project, titled Scotland's Earliest Megalithic Monuments, will be led by Archaeology Scotland over the next two years.

These types of ancient monuments are found in western Scotland, Ireland, along the coast of Wales, and in north-west France. However, despite their significance, relatively few of them have been scientifically dated.

This new project will carry out small-scale excavations at multiple locations in Scotland over the next two years, including ones in Argyll and Bute, the Outer Hebrides, and the Highlands, with additional activity in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Their aim is to find material that can be dated by radiocarbon, such as the remains of ancient bones or charcoal.

It is thought that the majority of these monuments date back 6,300 to 5,800 years ago (c. 4300 BC–3800 BC), coinciding with the transition to agriculture in the British Isles, a shift which also marked the beginnings of sedentary lifestyles and stone-built architecture. However, there has been considerable debate about the extent to which it was fuelled by migration from Continental Europe.

Above: Audrey Henshall at Kirk Yetholm, September 2004

It is hoped that this project will help answer some of these longstanding questions, as Dr Helen Spencer, head of research at the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, explained: "This was a hugely important time in Scottish prehistory..

"If we can date and sequence the building of these tombs, we can more precisely identify when farming began and how quickly it spread from the continent. These results would help answer what are arguably some of the biggest questions in Scottish archaeological research"

Local communities will play a key role in this work, with opportunities to participate in surveying and excavating these important sites.

The project also hopes to develop enhanced strategies for the management and interpretation of these internationally important sites going forward by improving documentation for local people and creating photogrammetric models of the monuments, which will be made accessible online.

The project honours the legacy of Audrey Henshall OBE HonFSAScot, a pioneering archaeologist whose studies of Scottish chambered cairns helped transform our understanding of the Neolithic period.

Her £100,000 bequest to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland has established a legacy fund supporting pre-Roman archaeology research. Dr Simon Gilmour FSAScot, the Society's director, said: "By leaving a gift in her will, Audrey Henshall made a lasting contribution to the future study of Scotland's past and the Society is thrilled to award this first grant to Scotland's Earliest Megalithic Monuments."

Dr Gavin MacGregor, director of Archaeology Scotland, said the charity was "exceptionally grateful" for the award. ■

Blenheim Palace launches historic £10m roof restoration

Blenheim Palace has announced its most ambitious restoration project to date – a £10.4 million initiative to restore the roof of the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The project, beginning in January 2025, will address extensive water damage, structural decay, and threats to the palace's historic architecture, including internationally significant frescoes and paintings.

The restoration will be led by DBR Ltd and aims to tackle water penetration issues affecting the Great Hall, Saloon, and former servants' quarters, where damp, mould, and decay have damaged structural timbers and artwork, including Sir James Thornhill's ceiling fresco. With only six downpipes for nearly an acre of roof, rainwater capacity will also be expanded to prevent further damage.

Alongside the restoration, Blenheim is introducing exclusive visitor experiences. A Roof Top View platform will offer unique perspectives of the estate and surrounding Oxfordshire countryside, while Life Below Stairs will take visitors into the historic kitchens and servants' quarters. Additionally, Family Treasures tours will showcase private rooms and priceless artefacts, such as an eigtheenth-century clock by Benjamin Vulliamy.

"This monumental roof project represents one of the most ambitious conservation efforts in Blenheim Palace's history," said Kelly Whitton, head of Built Heritage. "By opening up new areas of the Palace, we aim to highlight the importance of heritage conservation."

Visitor tickets will contribute directly to this vital restoration effort, set for completion in 2026. ■

Research reveals two hidden stone circles, a long cairn, and a dolmen on Dartmoor

A team of volunteers, led by University of Exeter PhD researcher Alan Endacott, has been working to excavate several potential archaeological features in northern Dartmoor.

The project forms part of a broader study into the Prehistoric Ritual Landscapes of Northeastern Dartmoor. Following the theory that the central uplands of the north Moor were 'enclosed' by a ring of stone circles in the late Neolithic period, the independent researcher first found the Sittaford stone circle in 2007 and has subsequently identified and recorded several other sites, along with rock art and other clues to the cultural significance of such monuments.

Over the past three years, sites first identified by surface remains have been surveyed, using various geophysical techniques, including measuring earth resistance and magnetic anomalies.

These surveys appeared to bear out the theory that multi-period monuments once formed part of a ritual landscape in the valley surrounding Taw Marsh, to the south of Belstone. These include a stone circle and long cairn near Irishman's Wall, a nearby collapsed dolmen (which would have been similar to but smaller than Spinster's Rock, near Drewsteignton) and another previously unrecorded stone circle on Taw Plain, under Metheral Hill.

Geophysics also hinted at other buried features, and one of the principal aims of the excavations was to establish the nature of these features and how they related to each other over time. It is thought that the first monuments here, including the dolmen, might date to the early Neolithic.

The stone circles probably date from the later Neolithic into the Early Bronze Age but may have had timber forerunners. A small number of finds were made, including pottery and worked flint, which will aid with the interpretation of the sites.

The hope is that charcoal retrieved during the excavations can help to date the monuments more accurately and provide clues to their development sequence. Samples were also collected for subsequent analysis to establish the nature of the local environment when the monuments were created and over time. This kind of information will have broader benefits for understanding Dartmoor's prehistoric monuments and landscapes.

The Taw Marsh Project was supported by the landowner, the Duchy of Cornwall, the local commoners, and the Dartmoor National Park Authority, the Dartmoor Society, the Dartmoor Preservation Association, and a personal crowd-funding campaign. ■

ALAN ENDACOTT

Left: Volunteers working in a trench at the Irishman's Wall stone circle

Research extends known route of one of UK's longest Roman aqueducts

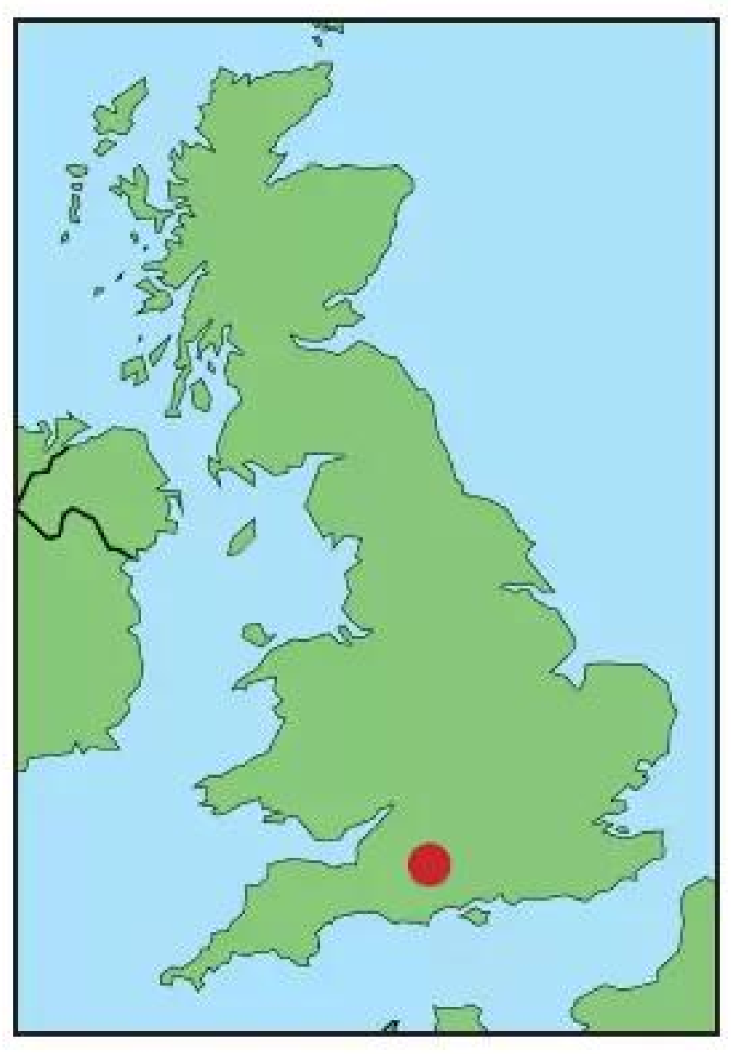
Recent research led by Bournemouth University has revealed that the Dorchester aqueduct, one of the longest Roman watercourses in Britain, extended two kilometres further than previously thought. The aqueduct, which followed a winding 20-kilometre route along the Frome Valley, was a vital part of Roman life in Dorchester, supplying water for its public baths, fountains, and wealthy households.

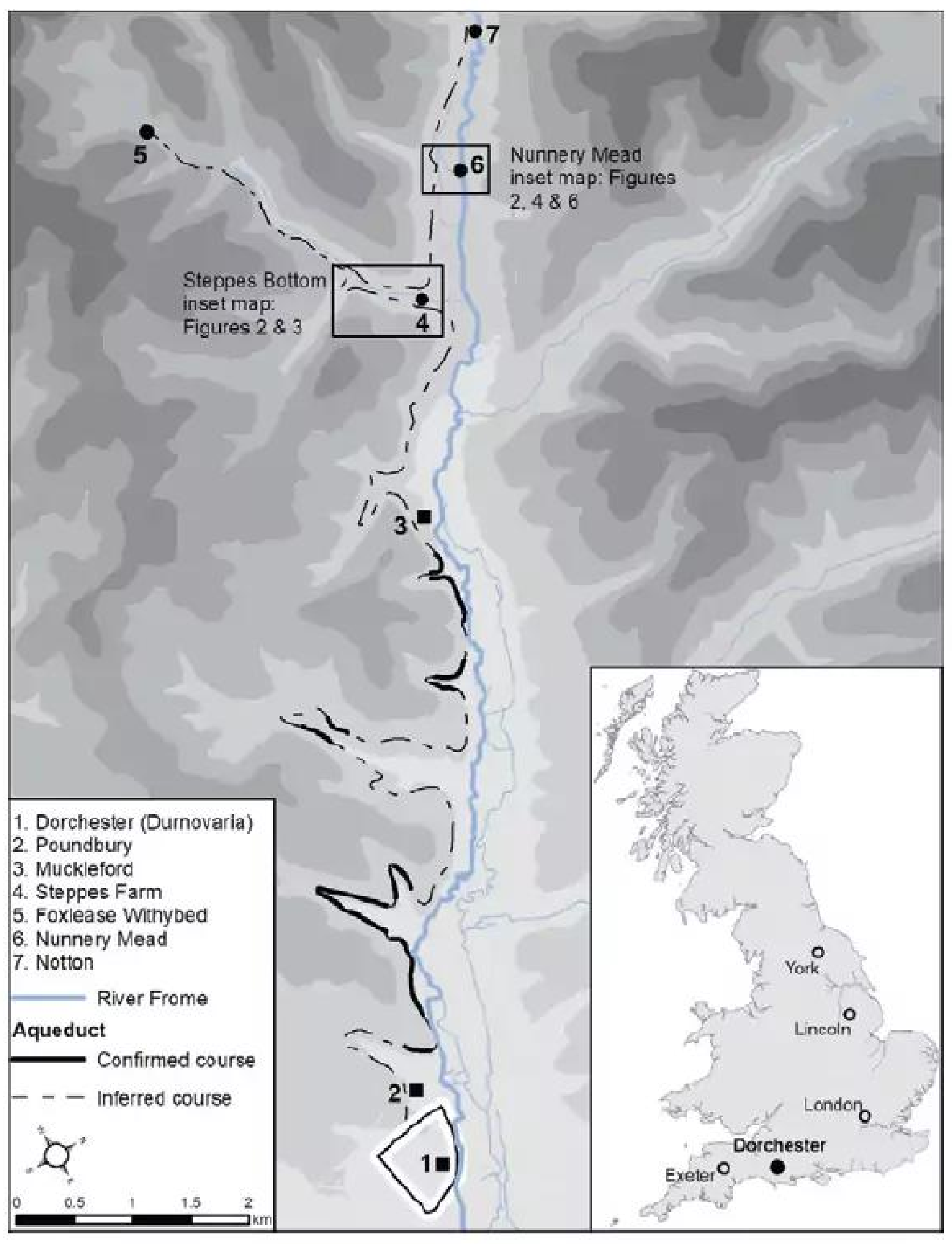
Earlier research in the 1990s had suggested that its source was a lake in Steppes Bottom. However, new surveys and archaeological investigations as part of this new study found evidence that its route headed further upstream, near the village of Norton.

Harry Manley from Bournemouth University's Department of Life & Environmental Sciences, who led the research, began the investigation by analysing publicly accessible LiDAR data which allowed him to trace the elevation and physical features of the land upstream of Steppes Bottom. This suggested that the aqueduct followed a more northerly path, a hypothesis that was corroborated by a geophysical survey carried out by Bournemouth University during work at Frampton Villa which lies further along this newly identified route, at Nunnery Mead.

"The geophysical survey revealed signs of a narrow channel running northwest to southeast. This matched up with my findings from the lidar data, so it seemed like the smoking gun that proved the aqueduct ran through the area," Manley explained. To confirm its precise location, the university's team used a ground-penetrating radar survey, followed by a small excavation, during which they found the remains of the wood-lined aqueduct channel.

Manley emphasised the significance of the discovery, stating: "Getting water supplied into prominent structures and buildings in the town would have been a sign of modern living at the time, and an indicator of the town's status… Understanding more about how it was constructed and maintained, and where it began, adds further detail to this vital aspect of Roman life." ■



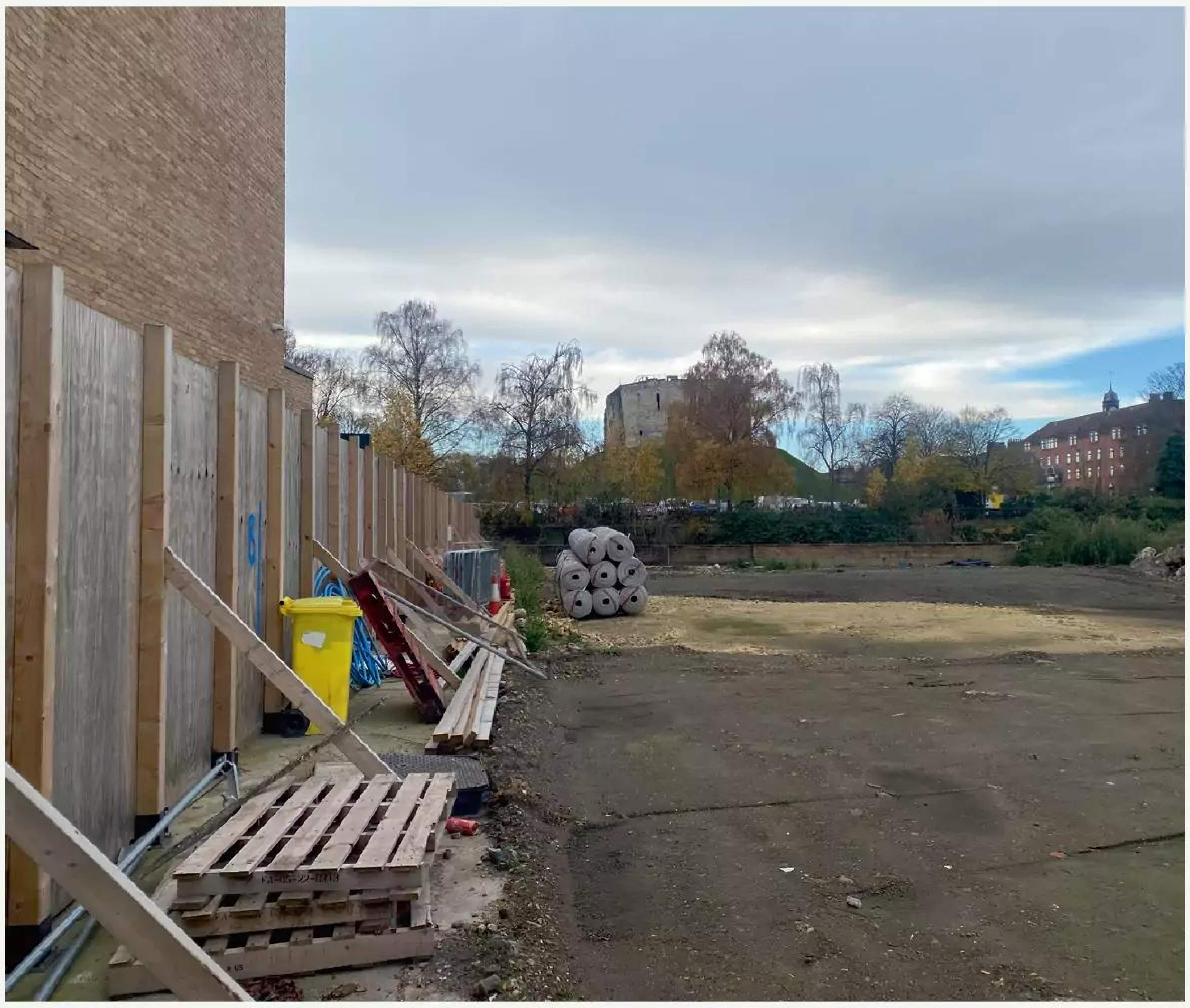


***Left: Map showing route of aqueduct to Notton. The findings have been published in the journal* Brittania**

BRITANNIA JOURNAL, CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework

George Knight, CBA Youth Advisor, reflects on how recent revision might provide new opportunities and challenges for archaeologists now and in the future



Right: New development facing Clifford's Tower, viewed from Piccadilly Street, taken Novmber, 2024 by

RACHEL ARBURY

The new Labour government has promised, since the election, to tackle the UK housing crisis by developing low-grade spaces in the 'green belt' zones around cities.

As of December 2024, Labour's latest revision of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has made these spaces, now officially termed 'grey belt' land, the focus of government housing policy. It is these 'grey belt' spaces that may form the next great challenge and opportunity for future archaeologists.

Grey belt land is defined in the NPPF as 'land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143'.

This includes sites like disused car parks, petrol stations or scrubland on edges of urban areas, which are derelict due to contamination, economic decline, and societal change.

Labour has reprioritised to grey belt land due to its high demand and high return, however, where this land has previously been developed, they will require environmental remediation.

Depending on the nature of previous ground intrusion, it's likely that archaeology will be amongst these constraints, especially where grey belt sites are adjacent to places and roads continuously occupied since prehistory.

It appears clear to me that grey belt sites might be assumed to have a low archaeological potential. However, the exorbitant amount of contrary evidence archaeologists now wield demonstrates that no site can be acquitted of containing human remains.

This was dramatically illustrated to the public through the recovery of King Richard III's remains below Leicester City Council's carpark in 2012, and has been reinforced to developers and government by newer discoveries like the pristine round house engine shed found at Curzon Street, Birmingham (2020), an Iron Age roundhouse found in Whitechapel, London (2019), and the numerous case studies in the 2024 report by Oxford Archaeology and the Forestry Commission's, *Assessing the Impact of Tree Roots on Archaeology*.

This shift in planning focus will present different opportunities to different archaeologists, as although it could be a source of new work, it could equally be the source of renewed conservation efforts.

For budding commercial archaeologists, grey belt development could mean starting their careers on many small developments radiating around cities like London, Birmingham, and Manchester, in a similar way to how previous careers began on HS2 and Crossrail. For aspiring community archaeologists, this could be the spark to create new projects with the increasingly important mission of preserving through record our green belts before they are redrawn.

Although grey belt sites might be considered low-quality green space by NPPF standards, arguably they are precious because they will be irreversibly replaced by urban sprawl.

Future archaeologists will seek to understand our lost landscapes, just as we seek to understand that of our immediate ancestors, whose underappreciated green spaces and hinterlands have been replaced by suburban and industrial developments.

It now falls to us, the next generation of archaeologists, to assess and characterise these spaces before they too are absorbed, and to utilise our skills and resources to do so before it's too late. ■

To read a more detailed version of George's blog please scan the QR code or head over to: https://www.archaeologyuk.org/resource/george-yab-blog.html

You can use this QR code to read a more detailed version of George's blog

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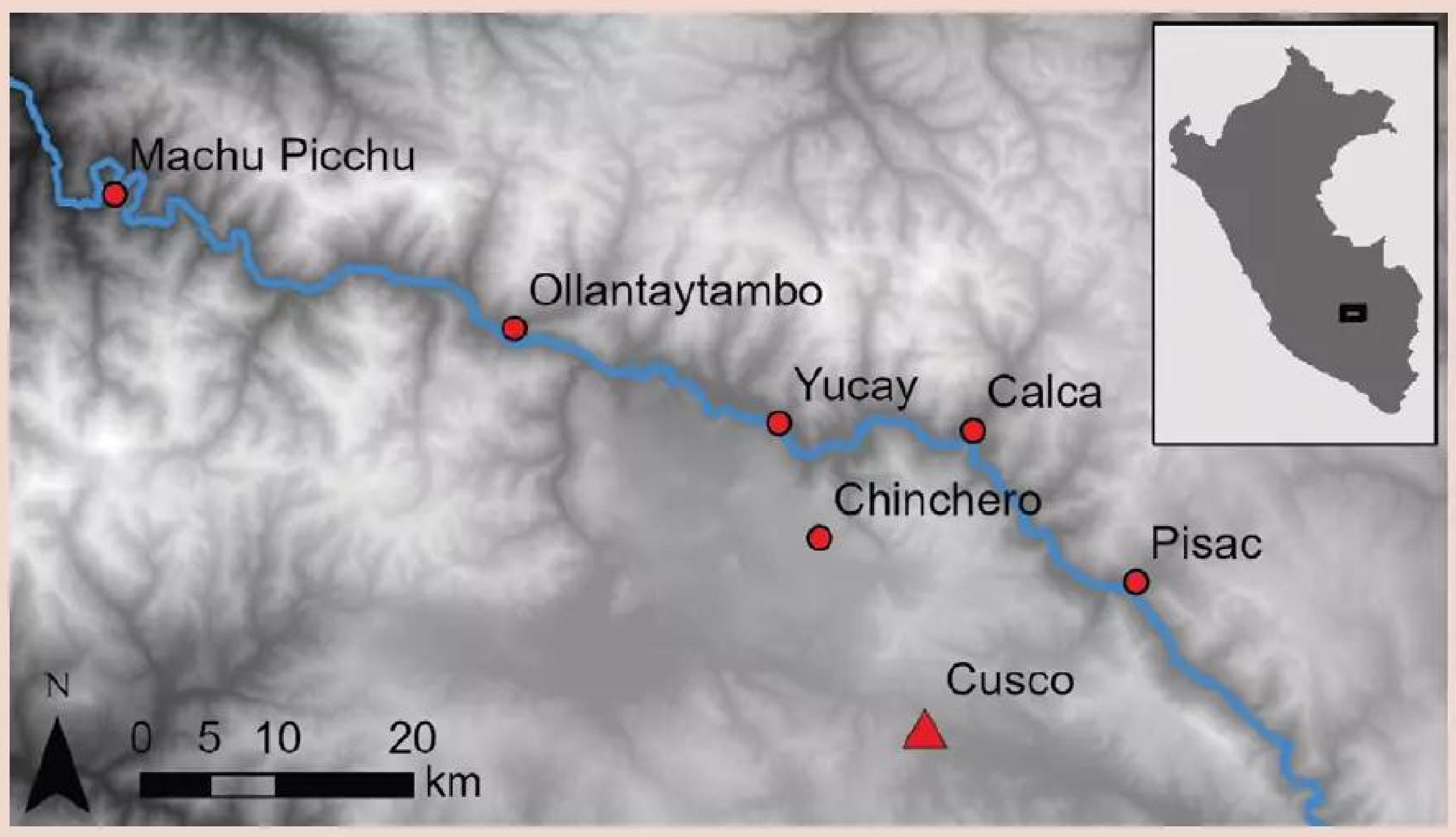
Summaries
Dr Alison Edwards

At Ollantaytambo, in the Cusco region of Peru, the Inka (c.1400–1532) built an elaborate landscape to facilitate intensive agriculture. Recent studies of the stratigraphy at the bottom of a former Inka reservoir show how agricultural practices gradually changed following Spanish colonisation of the area from the mid-sixteenth century onwards.

In recent decades, researchers have challenged depictions of the 1532 Spanish invasion and subsequent colonisation of the Andes that emphasise sudden rupture and immediate totalising change. This scholarship demonstrates that the creation of Spanish sovereignty was an extended process and reveals how Andean people resisted Spanish impositions and incorporated Spanish material culture into long-standing practices.

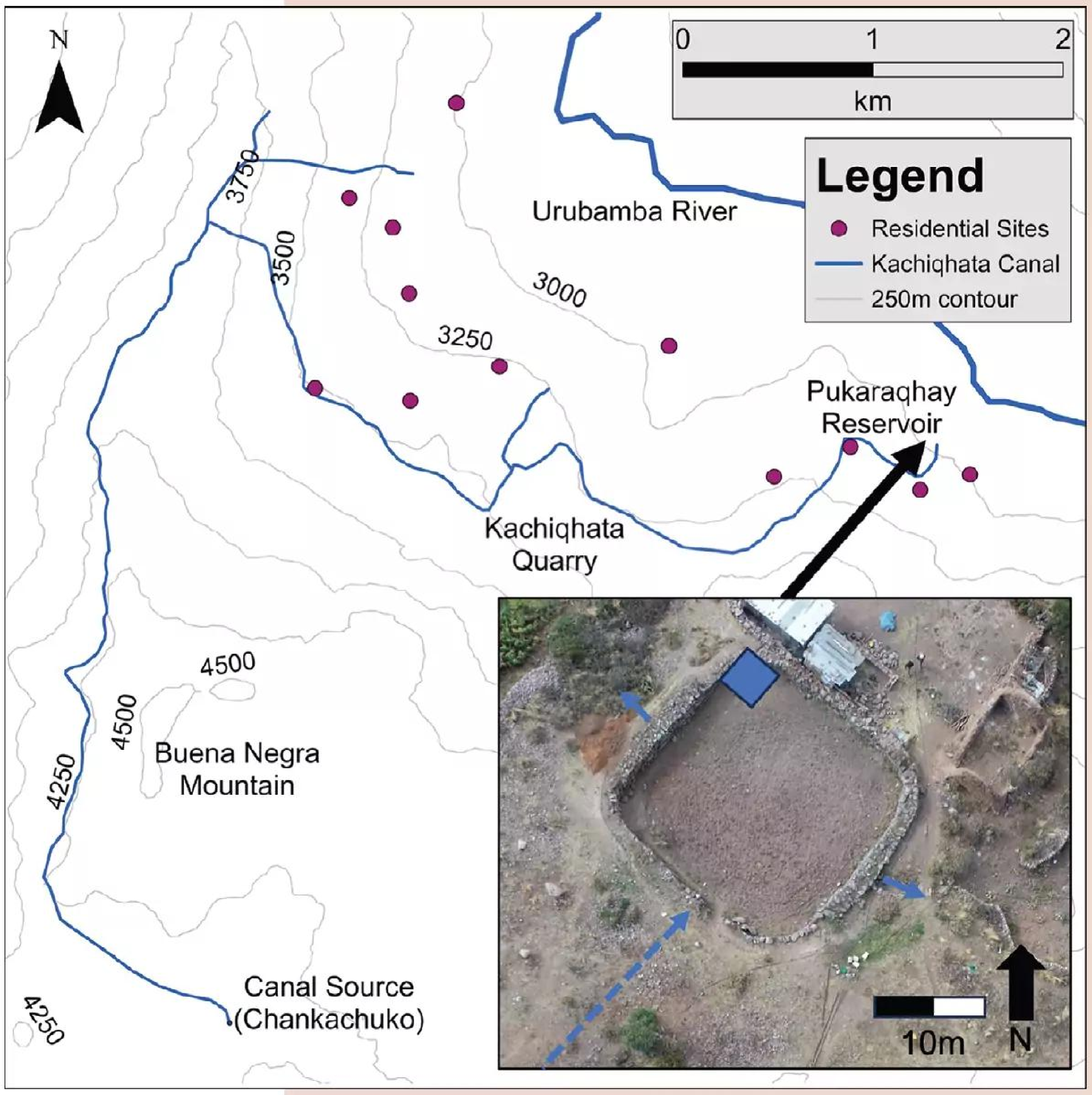
In analysing the botanical remains deposited in the Pukaraqhay reservoir, particularly the pollen and charred seeds, a recent study has demonstrated that the breakdown of the complex Inkan agricultural practices took place around the end of the seventeenth century, after the Inkan agricultural practices were defined by the landscape and included a series of terraced fields and a complex canal and reservoir network.

This system required constant maintenance and upkeep – activities that demand regional co-ordination and political organisation. Day-to-day agricultural practices (i.e. planting and irrigation schedules), routine maintenance of canals and terraces, and repair of acute damage required a cohesive social structure. Seemingly, farmers who once worked under Inka domination continued to maintain elaborate infrastructures for generations after the collapse of Inka bureaucracies.



HUNTER [3]

Top: Inset) map of Peru; main map) Urubamba Valley region of Cusco, indicating locations of select Inka royal estates along the Urubamba River
Above: Drone photo of Inka-built walled fields and terraces emanating from Ollantaytambo's urban core and lining the Urubamba River



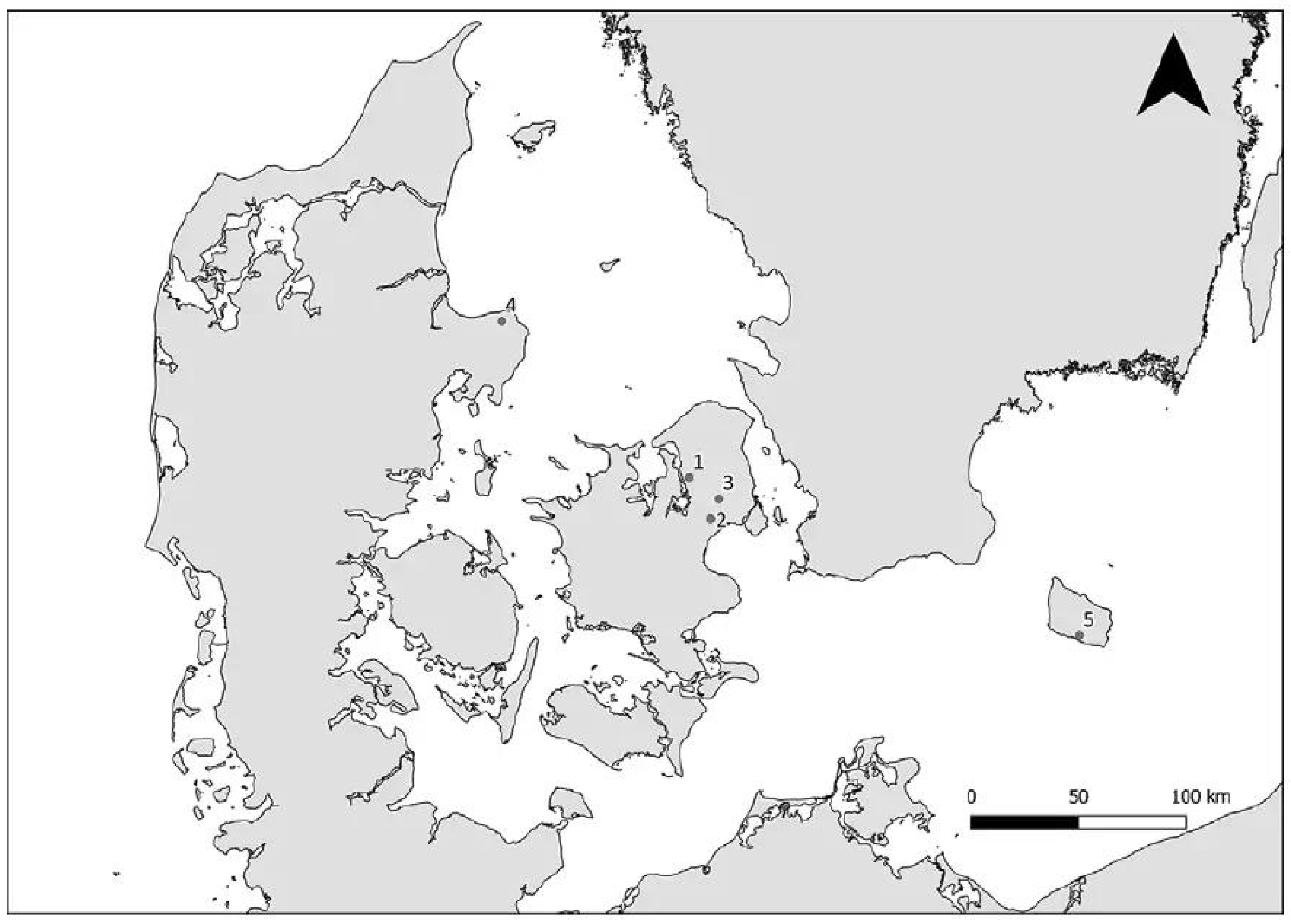
Above: Kachiqhata canal trajectory from the source in the Chankachuko plain to the Pukaraqhay reservoir. Inset: drone photo of the reservoir showing water inflow and outflow directions (blue arrows) and excavation location (blue square)

In turn, this result indicates that farmers sustained the social cohesion required for upkeep of the agrarian system long after the collapse of centralised Inka authority. This is supported by historical records.

The gradual end of this system is connected to the introduction of non-native crops and animal herds, which changed the landscape and established agricultural systems, and increased timber felling. In addition, the Spanish shifted from an indirect system of delegated control over rural areas into a more direct political control, which changed the social structures.

At Ollantaytambo, eroding terraces and fields were not the inevitable result of colonial rule, rather, they were the result of decisions about land use made, increasingly, by Spanish landowners. Hence, the structural transformation, the agrarian system can be understood both as part of a global wave of environmental change initiated by colonialism in the sixteenth century, and as a change to the local political ecology under colonial rule.

"The structural transformation of Ollantaytambo's Inka ecology under Spanish rule" by R. Alexander Hunter, Institute for Environment and Society, Brown University



JOHANNSEN [3]

Above: Distribution map of monumental Late Neolithic houses discussed in the text. 1) Vinge; 2) Sydvej 2; 3) Stuvehøj Mark; 4) Hemmed Plantation; 5) Limensgård

During the Late Neolithic, a series of short-lived, monumental-scale farmhouses were constructed across southern Scandinavia.

The archaeological record for this period features elaborately knapped flint artefacts, the construction of numerous two-aisled post-built houses and increasingly intensive cereal crop cultivation.

The emergence of monumental houses around 2000 BC sheds light on the development of social hierarchies and structures. Due to their large size (sometimes over 45 metres in length), these are sometimes even referred to as 'halls', implying the possible combined role of elite residence, feasting hall and temple similar to the halls of the Late Iron Age or Viking period. They mostly only have a single phase of construction, suggesting a short-lived habitation perhaps relating to the life of an individual.

Johannsen assesses six two-aisled houses which have been excavated at different sites in Denmark. Most of these were by far the largest construction in their settlement, although Limensgård on the island of Bornholm is unusual in containing several very large houses. Five of the six houses had a characteristic layout: a large room at the western end containing a fireplace, with a smaller room at the eastern end marked by a row of smaller internal postholes. These are known as Fosie-type houses, first identified at Fosie in southern Sweden. Finds of charred grain in the large western rooms support the idea that these areas were used for living space, including food preparation. The discovery of sickles, carbonised grain, grinding stones, and animal bones all suggest that these monumental structures were farmhouses.

These large structures are contemporary with intensifying agriculture. Soil sampling at Late Neolithic houses demonstrates that spelt was introduced during this period and a wide range of wheat and barley varieties were cultivated at each settlement; ard marks show that fields were routinely worked as part of the Late Neolithic cultivation cycle.

In the Middle Neolithic, there is limited evidence of two-aisled houses. The construction of large, permanent dwellings suggests a more sedentary population of farmers. Increased food production then led to a boom in population.

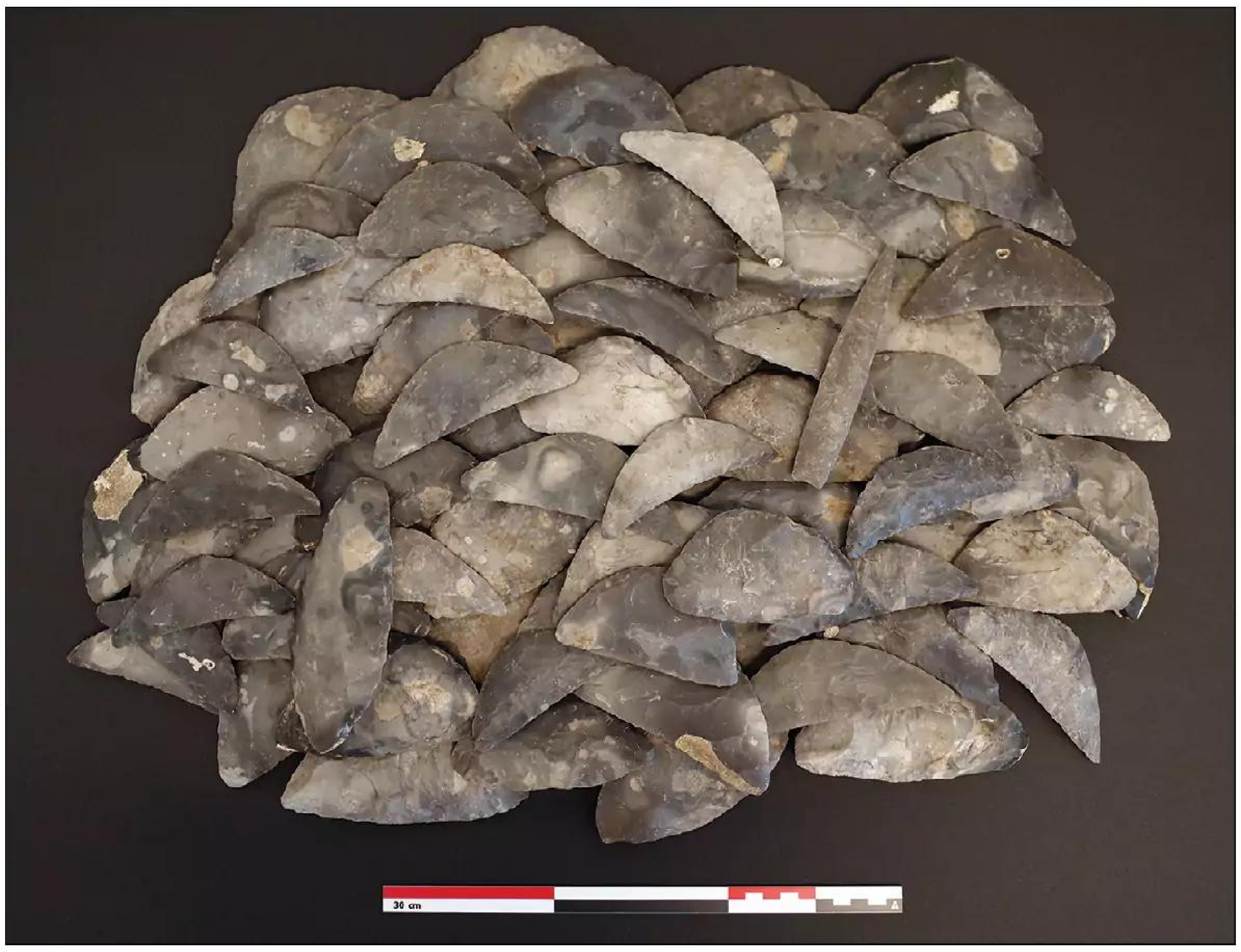
It is generally accepted that surplus food production is required to free up labour for other non-subsistence tasks, including indications of social hierarchy such as specialised production and elaborate tombs. A productive farming economy, capable of supplying a society with plentiful food, is a resource that can be potentially mobilised by aspiring leaders.

An example of what can be produced when there is plentiful food is the large seagoing boats constructed in the late Neolithic, which required a large skilled workforce to build. These could be used for raiding and, perhaps more importantly, trade expeditions, importing rare resources such as metals and further consolidating the power of the individuals who organised the boats' construction.

Monumental farmhouses demonstrate the development of social hierarchies, perhaps inspired by large constructions elsewhere in Europe. They signalled large-scale agricultural production which led to wealth and surplus and were a widely visible display of the power of the household. Although their agricultural function remained the same as that of smaller, contemporaneous farmhouses, their monumentality is the most explicit expression of the emergence of a farmer-elite in agricultural communities around 2000 BC.

"Monumental farmhouses and powerful farmers in Late Neolithic Denmark" by Jens Winther Johannsen, Aarhus University

Below: The Gilbjerghoved hoard from the northern part of Zealand, Denmark, contains 26 sickles, 86 sickle preforms, one spearhead, and one dagger preform (Type Ix) and is the largest Late Neolithic hoard from southern Scandinavia



Above: Dagger of Lomborg Type IV. The dagger, which is approximately 200mm long, is part of a hoard containing eight other daggers and a sickle. The hoard was found during fieldwork in Betarp, Burseryd parish, Småland, in the southwestern part of Sweden

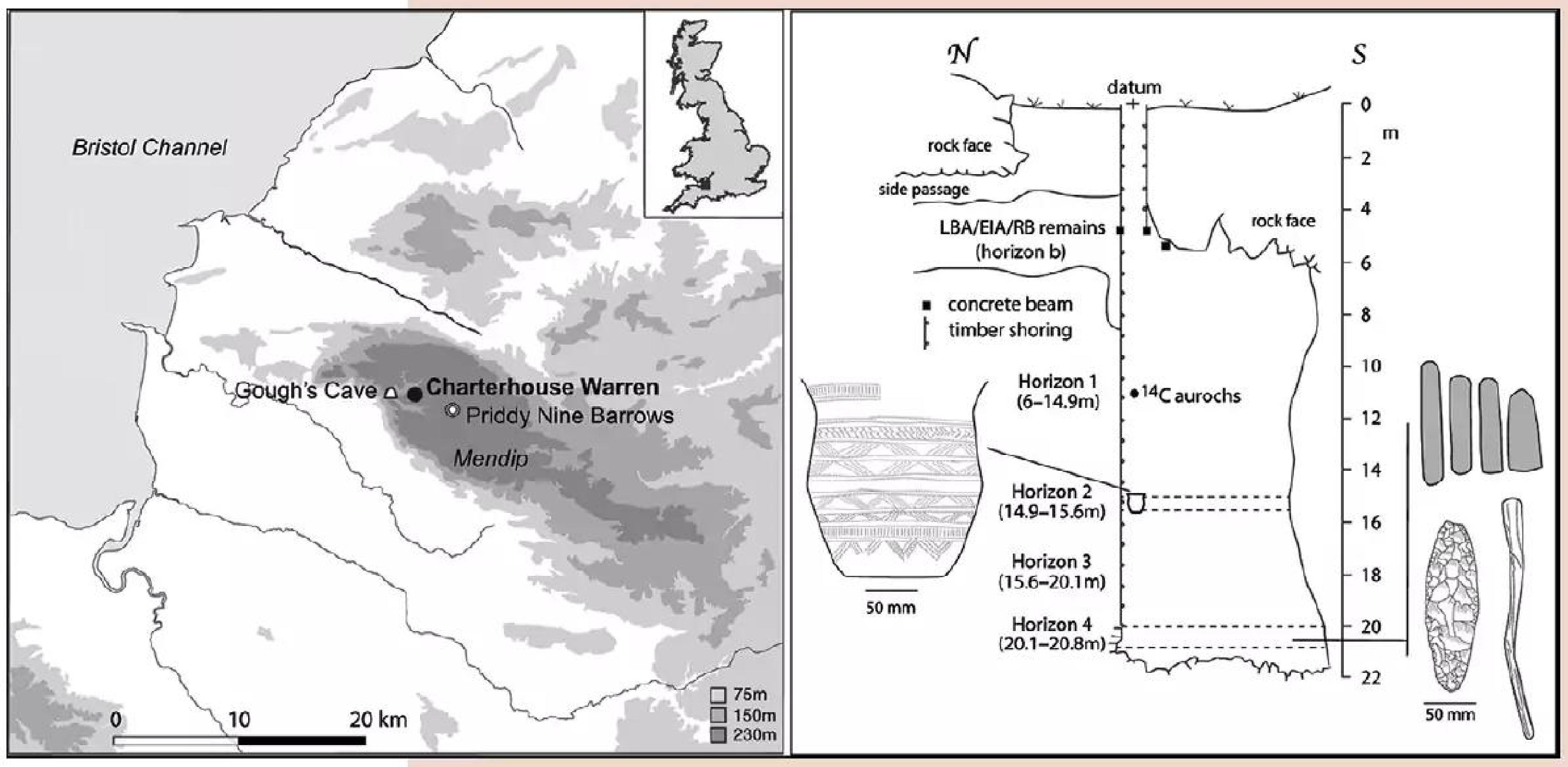
The Early Bronze Age site of Charterhouse Warren, Somerset, reveals the darker side of human prehistory. Excavated in the 1970s, the site contains the remains of at least 37 men, women, and children who were thrown down a 15m-deep natural shaft.

This little-known assemblage is notable for the sheer number of cutmarks on the bones indicating dismemberment and defleshing. While evidence for interpersonal violence is not unknown in British prehistory, nothing else on this scale has been found, and the site joins a small number of Neolithic, Chalcolithic, and Bronze Age sites in continental Europe showing extreme violence and postmortem processing of human remains.

It is also rare to find multiple burials at this time. The large assemblage of disarticulated remains at Charterhouse Warren therefore stands in contrast to normative funerary rites for the period, even before the evidence for violence is considered. Body parts were deposited in what was probably a single event between 2210 and 2010 Cal BC, in a partly infilled shaft that was still 15m deep, together with a faunal assemblage also showing evidence of butchery (though perhaps less intensive than that seen on the human remains).

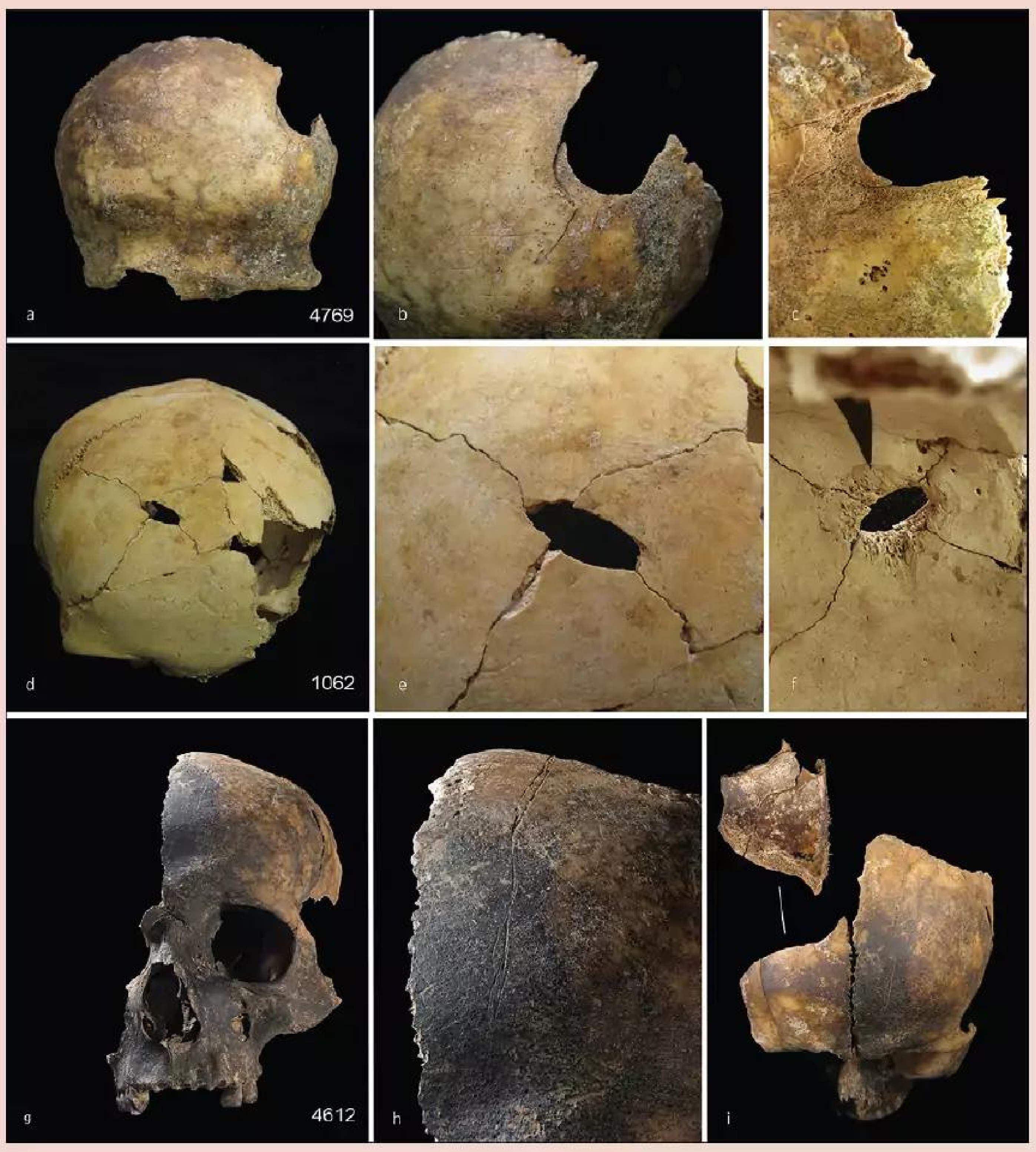
Due to challenging excavation of the remains from sediment at the base of the Charterhouse Warren Farm Shaft, stratigraphic details are not available for all the bones found. Based on a combination of non-repeating fragments of mandibles and long bones, at least 37 individuals are conservatively estimated to be represented, though the real total is probably higher.

The individuals all appear to be local or from within 10km of the site. Ongoing ancient DNA analysis of ancestry and familial relationships should provide additional insights into the nature of the assemblage, and whether it represents a snapshot of a 'living community'.



Above: Left) Location of Charterhouse Warren, Mendip, Somerset; right) schematic north-south section through the entrance shaft showing locations of selected artefacts (Beaker vessel, sponge finger stones, flint dagger, antler spatula)

Both males and females are represented, but relative proportions cannot be estimated at this stage. Older children and adolescents together comprise nearly 50 per cent of the assemblage, which is more characteristic of a catastrophic sudden event as these age groups usually experience low mortality in stable populations.



SCHULTING, ET AL [2]

Above: Examples of cranial trauma. Top) perimortem injury to the left posterior of the frontal bone (a), cutmarks can also be seen on the frontal bone (b) and patinated bevel of the internal cranial surface is apparent around the injury (c); middle) cranium with a perforating injury to mid-frontal bone (d), a closer view shows radiating fracture lines (e) and the internal view shows patinated bevel (f); bottom) adult cranium (g), close inspection shows cutmarks running along the mid-frontal (h) and a perimortem blunt force fracture to the conjoining right frontal bone fragment (i)

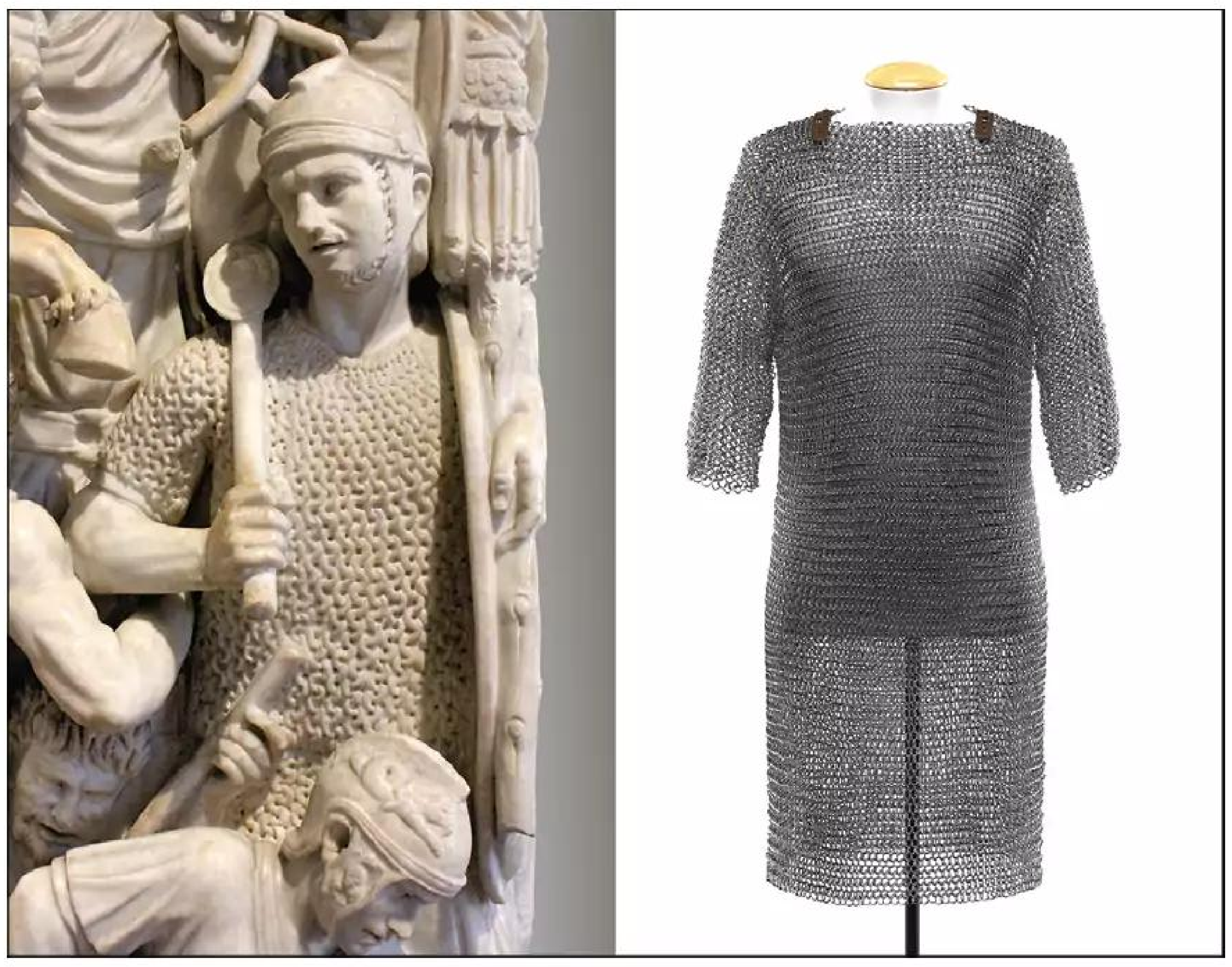
There is evidence of blunt force trauma to skulls as well as cuts. Cutmarks, often multiple, are found on 20% of the human elements, and one-third exhibit perimortem fracturing. The locations of the cutmarks on the skeletal remains are consistent with both disarticulation and defleshing.

The presence of perimortem injuries in the human bone assemblage is not consistent with any known mortuary rites. The cranial injuries and the absence of projectile points found nearby (despite evidence for the use of the bow and arrow in Early Bronze Age conflicts) suggests that the violence was face-to-face from the outset, and not the result of an armed confrontation between two groups. The victims were either already captives or were taken by surprise – a common tactic in warfare among small-scale societies.

The level of violence expressed in the assemblage could indicate that the actions were retaliatory, in response to a previous violent event or the perceived breach of a serious social taboo. Cases of anthropophagy have been proposed (and debated) at other prehistoric European sites. Though often controversial, the evidence that cannibalism did occur on occasion seems incontrovertible. It is likely that other examples did not survive in the archaeological record.

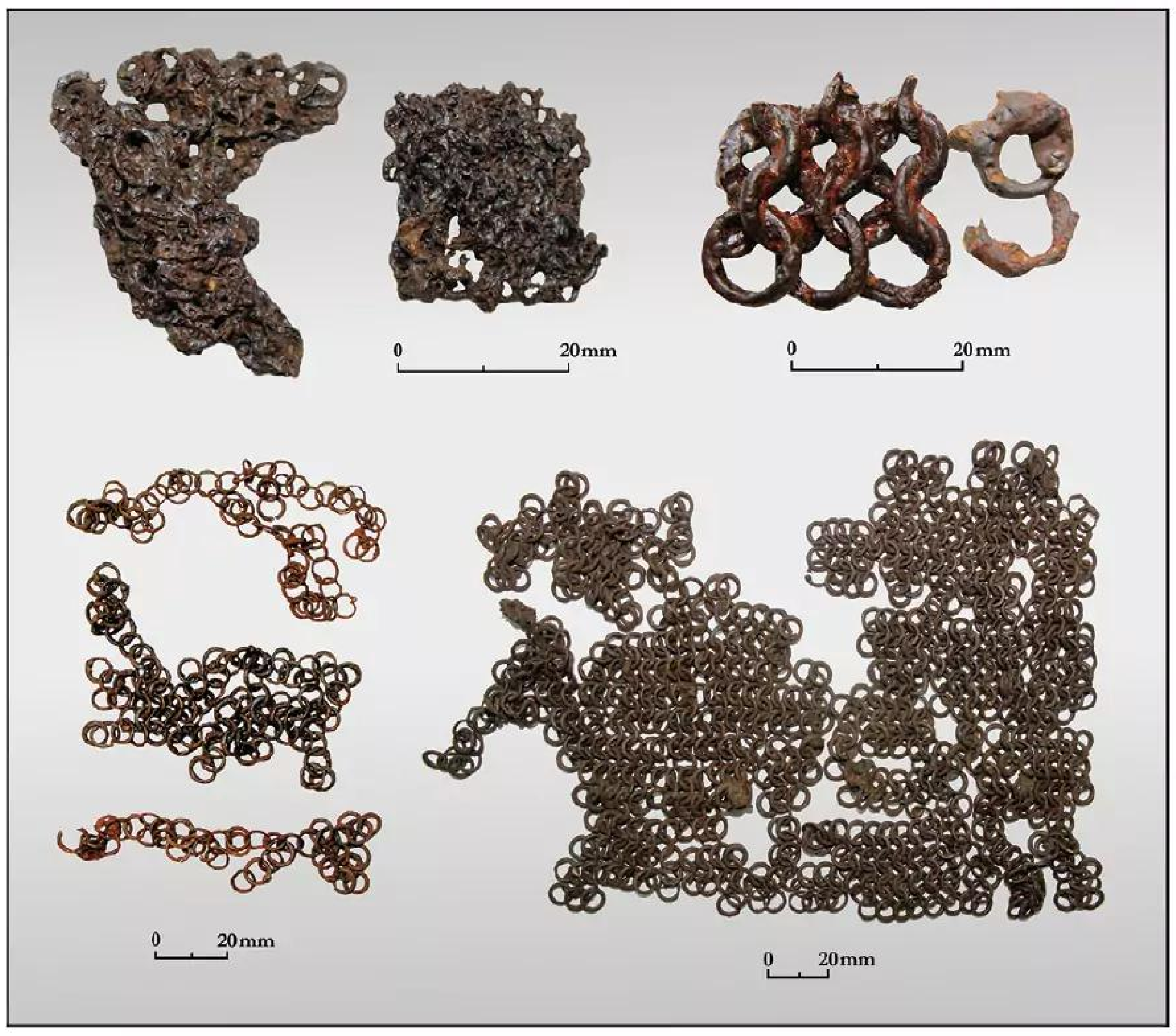
The factors contributing to such violence remain unclear, but the event may have been part of a spiralling cycle of revenge arising from social and political pressures within or between Early Bronze Age communities.

"The darker angels of our nature: Early Bronze Age butchered human remains from Charterhouse Warren, Somerset, UK" by Rick J. Schulting, et al, University of Oxford



WIJNHOVEN [2]

***Left:* Detail of the Great Ludovisi Sarcophagus (Rome), mid third-century AD, depicting a standard-bearer in a short-sleeved mail coat; *r)* Digital reconstruction of a mail coat from Vimose (Denmark), second half of the second century to early third century AD (reconstruction by A. Moskvin & M.A. Wijnhoven)**



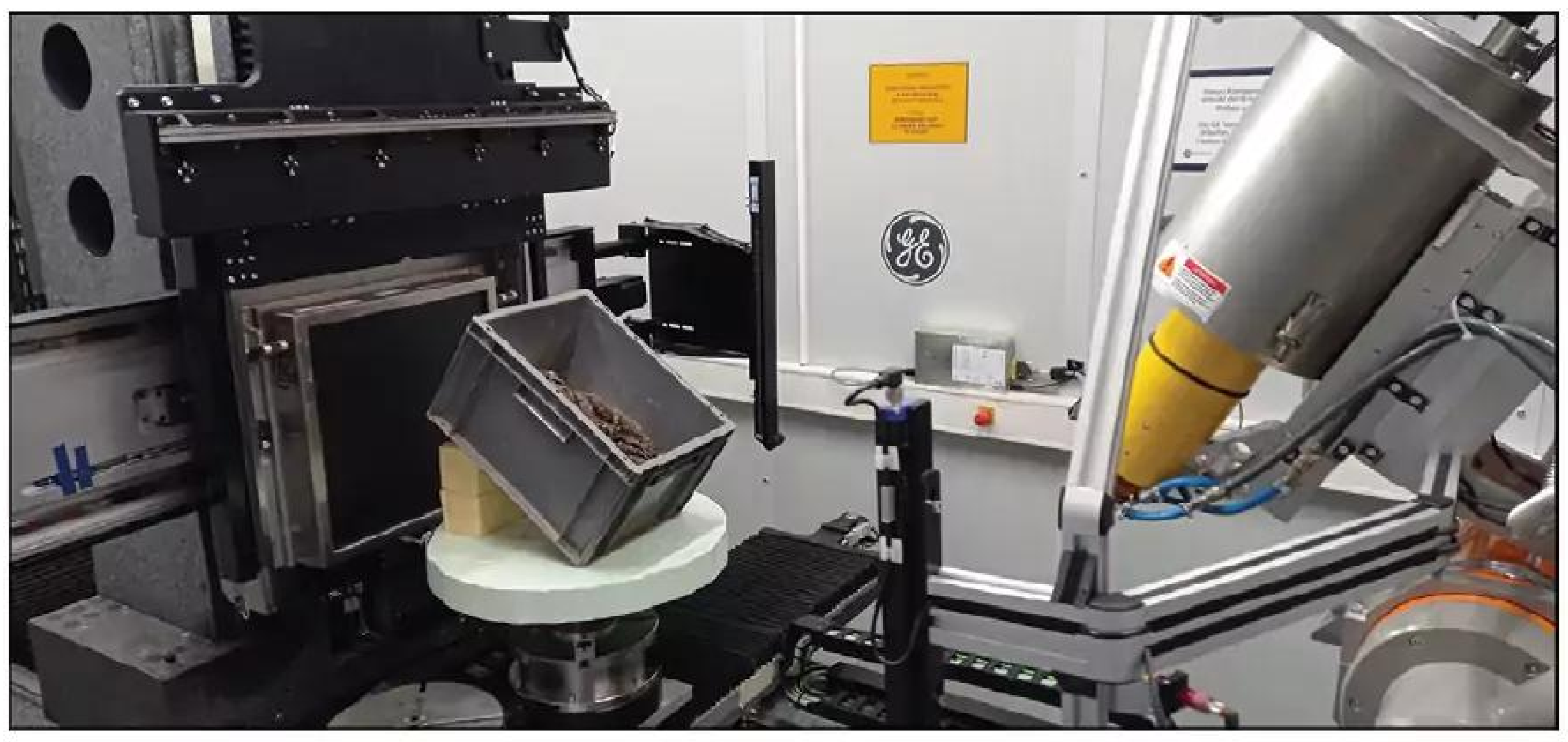
***Left:* Examples of mail fragments from the Roman Principate. *Top left:* Loughor, United Kingdom, c.260–310. *Top right:* Gnotzheim, Germany, second–third centuries. *Bottom left:* Newstead, United Kingdom, 140–180. *Bottom right:* Sisak, Croatia, broadly dated to the Roman Principate**

A 14kg hoard of mail armour from near the Roman legionary fortress of Bonn, Germany, offers insight into the organisation of recycling and repair on Rome's northern frontier. The armour was discovered in a pit and excavated as a single block, which was subsequently conserved at the LVR-LandesMuseum Bonn. South of the Roman legionary fortress of Bonna, there was a vicus or small town, forming a distinct settlement with its own baths, workshop areas, and infrastructure. Excavations were undertaken in 2008 and 2012 by the LVR-State Service for Archaeological Heritage in the Rhineland.

A series of five strip houses were discovered, and 260mm outside the outer wall, the pit containing the metal armour was uncovered. Despite almost all iron of the mail block having corroded away, and nowadays mainly consisting of corrosion products, the mail remains still weigh more than 14kg in total, indicating the presence of a significant amount of armour. The mail all appears to have been left at one time, and there were no other finds.

The remains were examined macroscopically and using x-ray, which proved challenging because of the density of the block, and computed tomography (CT) scans. Based on the scans and the different sizes of the rings used to construct the mail links, it is believed there are four different mail coats within the block. The construction and style of the mail can be dated to the third century AD.

Mail armour was often repaired and reused to reduce waste and keep the army supplied, particularly on the frontiers of empire where resources could be scarce. A 10-tonne metal deposit primarily consisting of iron nails, at the Inchtuthil legionary fortress in Scotland, underscores the immense scale of metal consumption by the Roman army. However, certain metal artefacts cannot be recycled into usable raw material – including iron mail armour. This is because the mail rings cannot be successfully melted down, as the heat required to melt the iron would mostly burn away the small, thin rings. Mail was therefore repaired in a patchwork style, like worn textiles.



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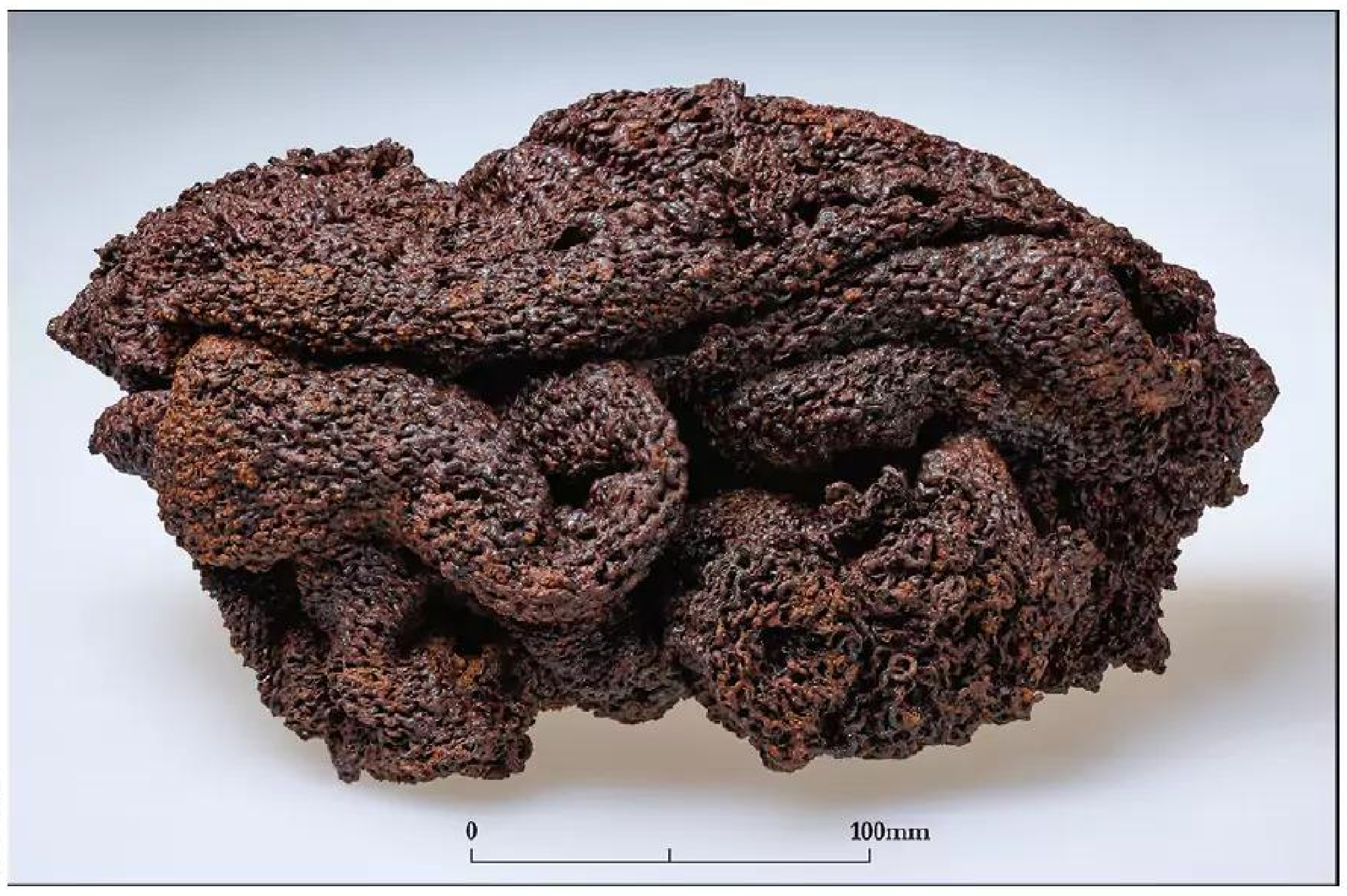


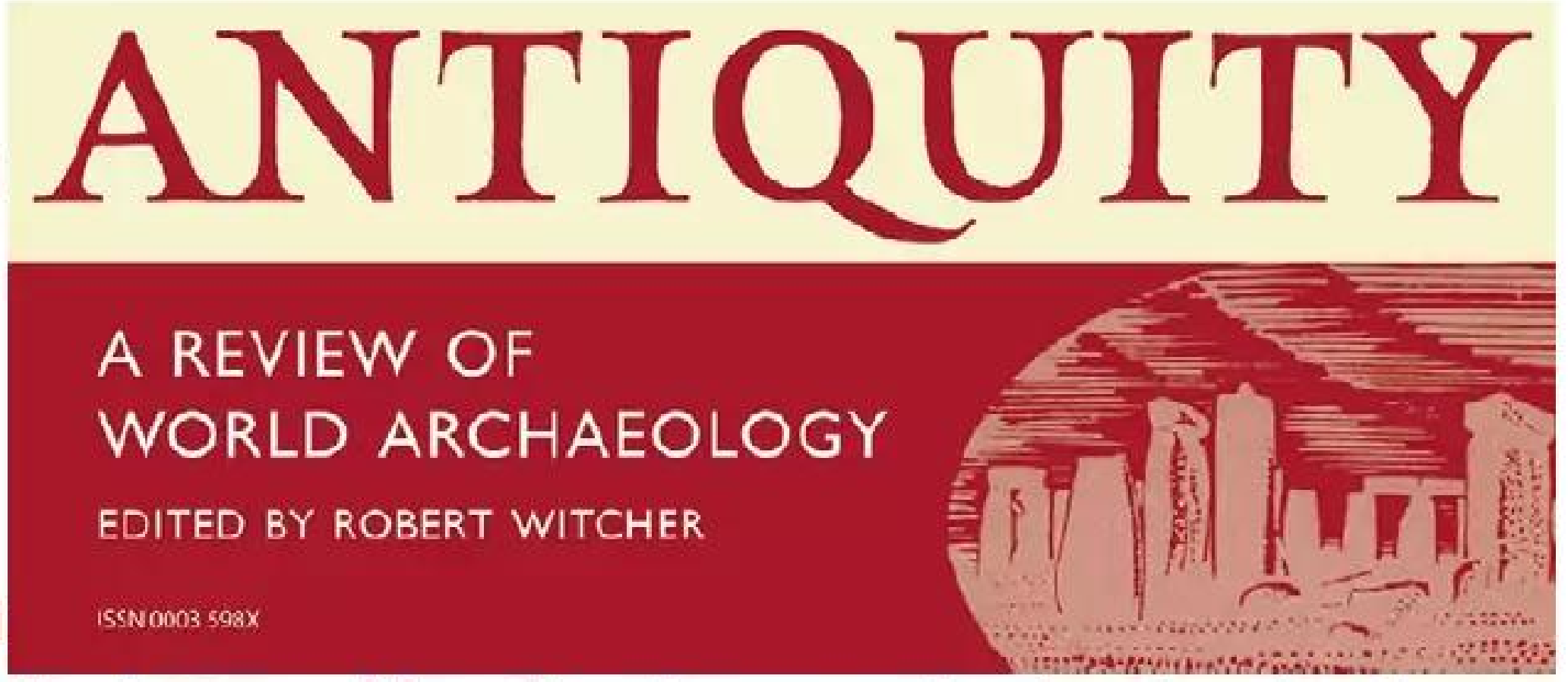
VOGEL

***Top:* Phoenix Vtomelx L450 micro-CT-system of Waygate Technologies/Baker Hughes Digital Solutions GmbH in Wunstorf**
***Above:* The large block of mail from the Bonn hoard**

Why was it deposited? The context does not suggest any ritual significance and the contents of the hoard – comprising four (partial) mail garments of different quantities with no other military gear – make a votive offering improbable. However, the third century was the end point of Roman occupation of this area; other finds suggest the site occupants decided to leave, with limited signs of violence.

In this scenario, it seems most likely that, during the planned abandonment of the vicus, the mail was deemed too heavy to be taken away, no longer of economic value, or was simply forgotten. Similar to the behaviour observed during the abandonment of military sites, the material was not left exposed but was 'neatly' deposited to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands.

"Recycling and repair on the Roman frontier: a hoard of mail armour from Bonn" by Martijn A. Wijnhoven, Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences; Claudia Koppmann, LVR-Amt für Bodendenkmalpflege im Rheinland, Bonn; and Holger Becker, LVR-Landes Museum, Bonn



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BRITISH MUSEUM

The Chew Valley Hoard:

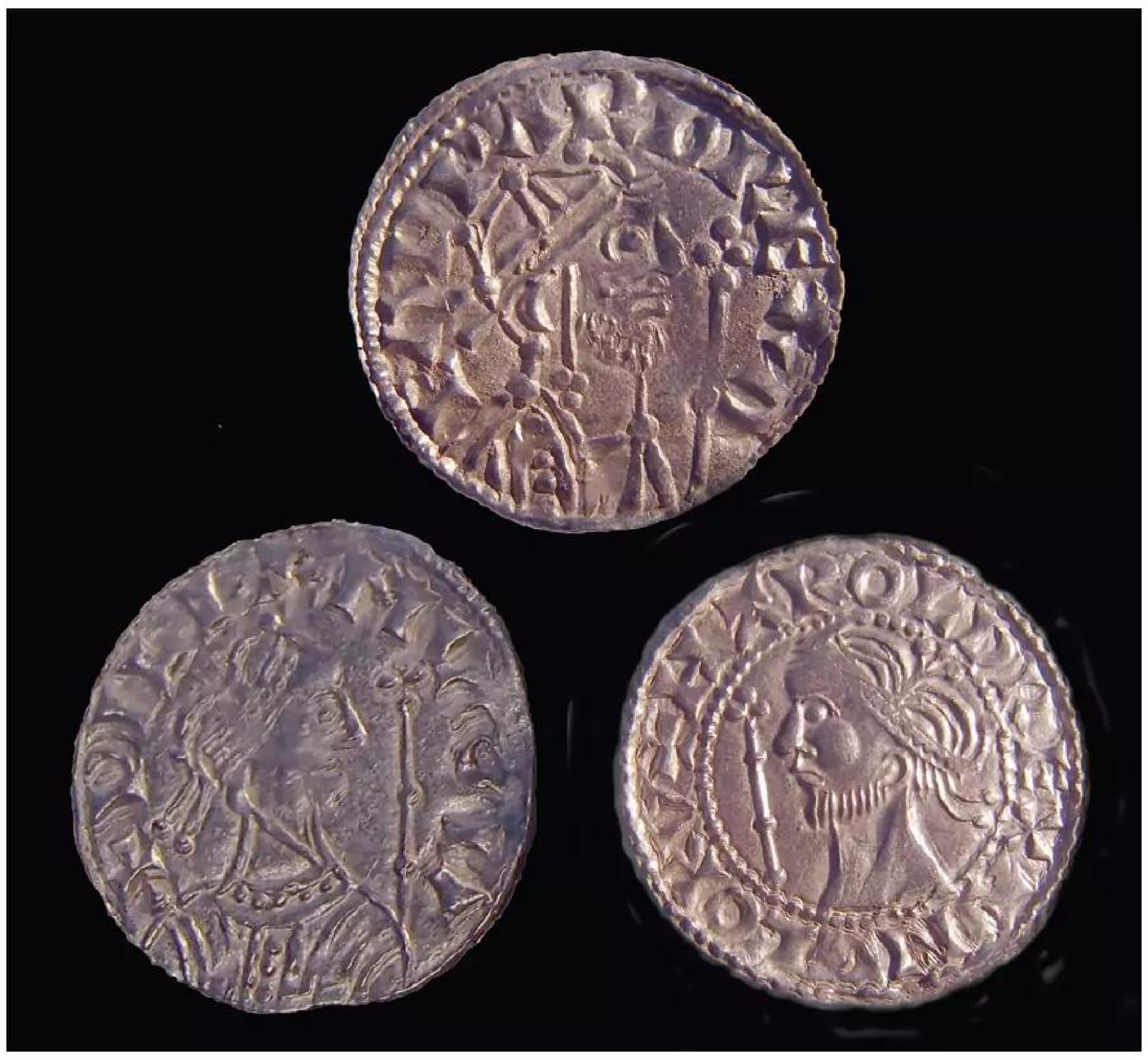
Turmoil in the aftermath of conquest!

Opposite: *Chew Valley Hoard conserved: The Chew Valley Hoard of 2,584 silver pennies dates from the turmoil of the Norman Conquest of England and has been acquired by the South West Heritage Trust*

Amal Khreisheh, South West Heritage Trust senior curator, and Michael Lewis, head, Portable Antiquities & Treasure, British Museum, reveal what this impressive collection of coins, spanning the rule of three kings, can tell us about the political unrest and rebellion that followed William the Conqueror's coronation

BRITISH MUSEUM [2]

Right: Conservators at the British Museum cleaning the coin hoard



Below: Chew Valley Hoard issuers Edward, Harold II and William I: Represented on just under half the coins is Harold II, the last crowned Saxon king of England (bottom right). Just over half feature William I 'The Conqueror', the first Norman king (bottom left). There is one coin that features Edward 'The Confessor' (top).

The Chew Valley Hoard is an impressive collection of coins, their quantity and quality unmatched as well as their true significance at a pivotal moment in our nation's history.

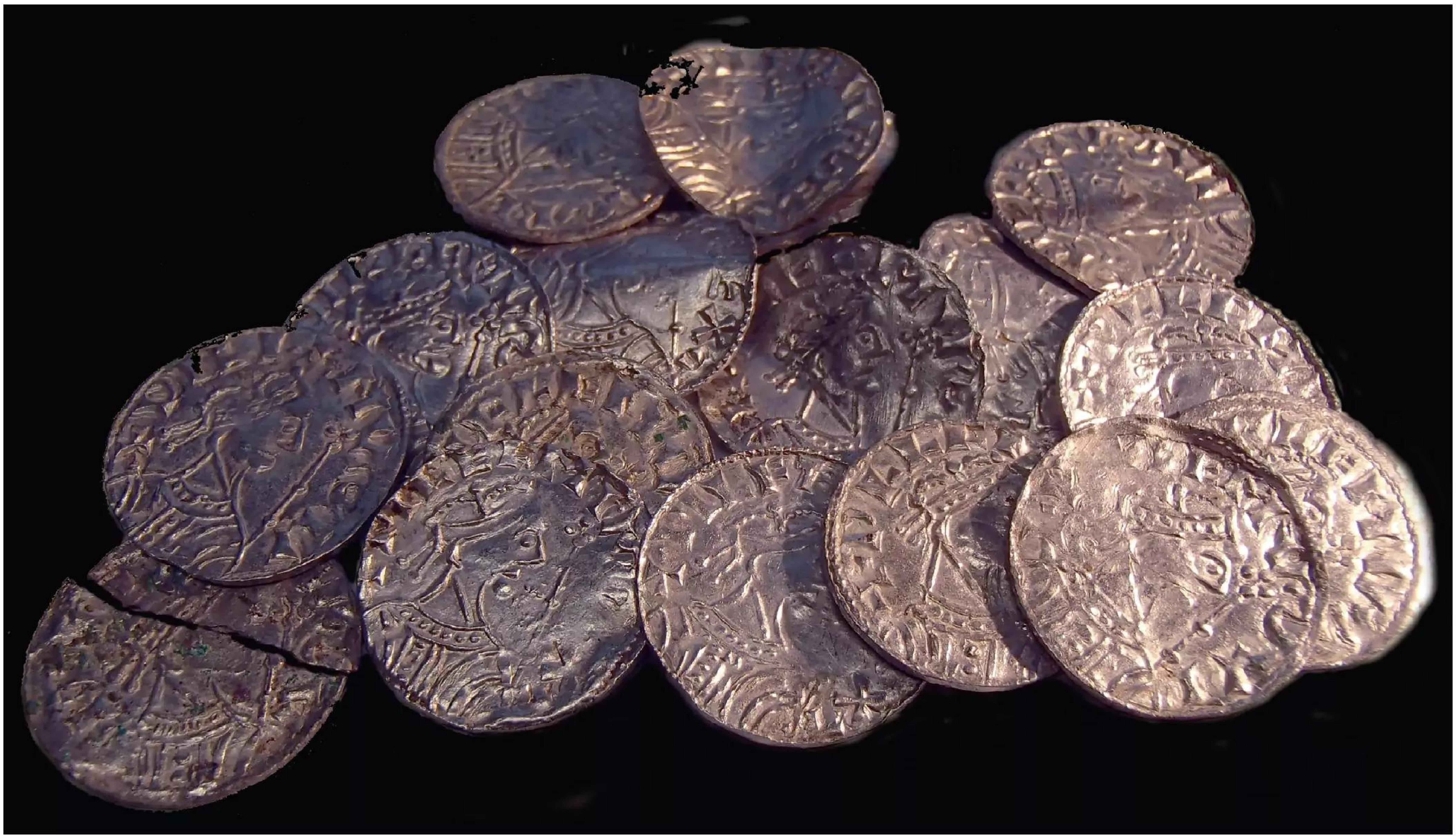
The 2,584 silver pennies dating to the Norman Conquest and the years following invasion give us an insight into how William the Conqueror's early reign was plagued by political unrest, turmoil, and rebellion.

1066, the Chew Valley Hoard and all that

The year 1066 has left an indelible mark on the national consciousness as 'the most famous date in English history' when the country was successfully 'conquered' for the last time. That might be true to a degree, but England was not conquered in a day, or even a month, or a year.

On Christmas Day 1066, when William 'the Conqueror' was crowned King of England in Westminster Abbey to the adulation of both his English and Norman subjects, 'the conquest' was not fully achieved.

For years after 1066, the English rebelled against their new Norman masters, seeking 'liberation' from what seventeenth-century English nationalists first termed 'the Norman yoke'. It was within this atmosphere of fear that the Chew Valley Hoard of



BRITISH MUSEUM

2,584 silver pennies was buried, probably for safekeeping, and never reclaimed.

In November 2024, almost 1,000 years after it was buried, the Chew Valley Hoard went on display at the British Museum. The hoard was acquired by the South West Heritage Trust on behalf of Somerset Council for £4.3 million, making it the highest value treasure acquisition on record.

The acquisition was made possible thanks to major funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund. The hoard will remain on display at the British Museum until 27 May 2025, later returning to the Museum of Somerset in Taunton where it will find a permanent home.

Discovery

Experienced metal detectorist Adam Staples had bought himself a new metal detecting machine – a Minlab Equinox 800 – which was proving fruitful. Soon, some friends followed suit, turning to him for advice. The seven friends decided to embark on a weekend together to try out their new detectors.

They gained permission to detect in the countryside of the Chew Valley in southwest England. Though they expected to make finds, they did not anticipate discovering the find of a lifetime.

Above: Chew Valley Hoard Small Group: The Chew Valley Hoard was probably deposited for safekeeping during rebellions in the southwest against the new Norman king, William 'the Conqueror'

SOME OF MY
BEST FINDS
ARE IRON

Right: The hoard's finder, Adam Staples

ADAM STAPLES

Saturday 26 January 2019 proved milder than expected for the time of the year, though rain threatened. The first field the friends searched brought up little except metal scraps, so they tried elsewhere. When other land proved even less productive, some of the detectorists returned to the first field, where one found a William I silver penny in exceptionally good condition.

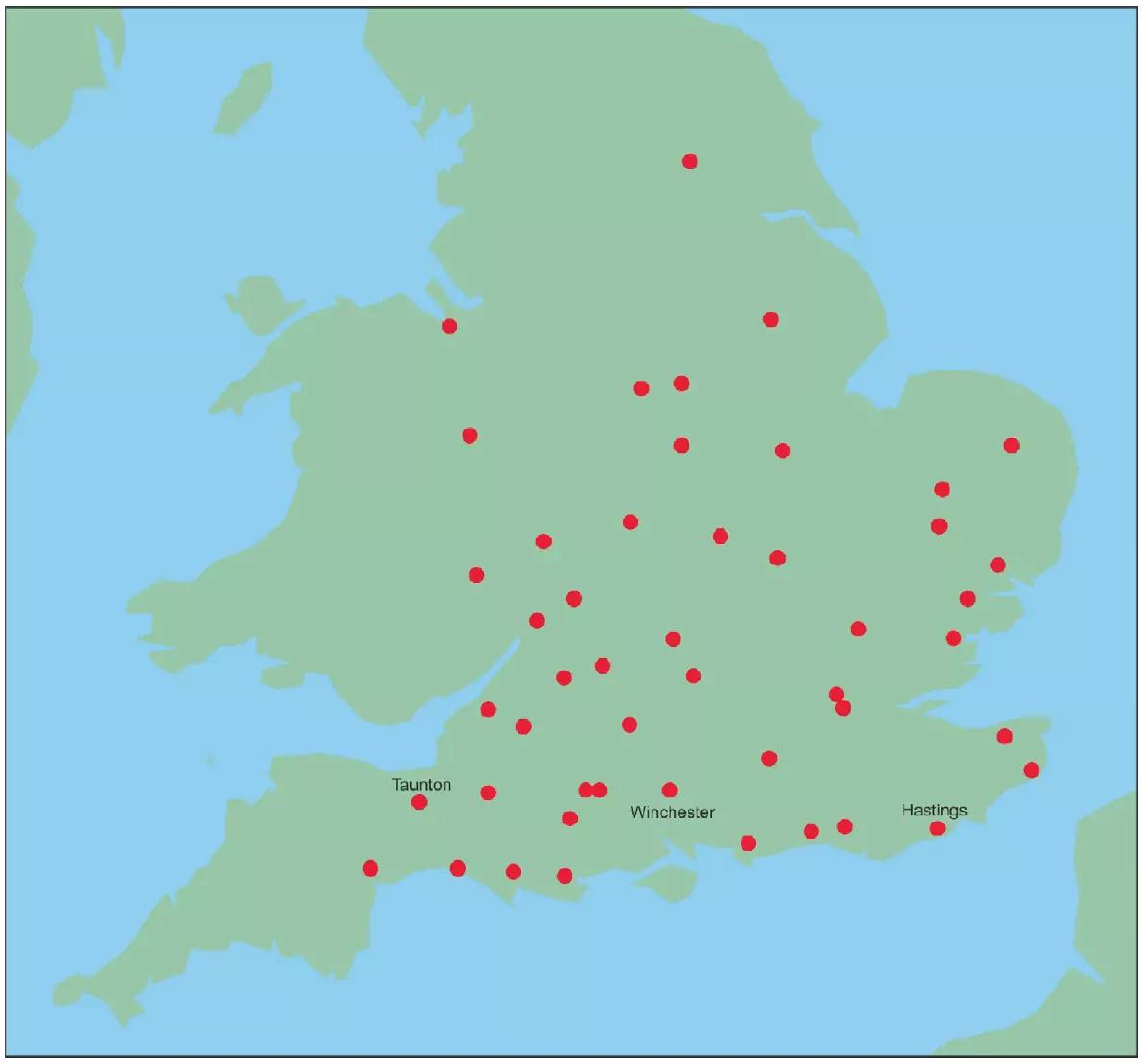
It was a lovely find, earning him the congratulations of his colleagues. Almost immediately, those gathered "got signals from beneath their boots" – first another penny of William I and then one of Harold II.

As Adam explained, "their excitement levels went through the roof" as they investigated more and more signals.

Adam sought archaeological help by contacting local Finds Liaison Officers (FLOs) working for the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) – a project to record archaeological finds made by the public. The detectorists had unearthed hundreds of coins, all seemingly in the plough zone, scattered and dispersed. All were silver pennies of William I and Harold II.

By the evening, 2,000 coins had been discovered. The exhausted group gathered at a local pub, somewhat in shock at the enormity of their discovery. This was clearly an important find. Adam recalls that the detecting mates all sat on one side of a table, pints in hand, looking out of the pub window towards the car where the precious load was stored. That night, the detecting septet hardly slept.

***Right:* Map showing distribution of centres of coin production and mints and moneyers relating to some of the coins found in the hoard discovery**



SOUTH WEST HERITAGE TRUST AND BRITISH MUSEUM

Realising that the hoard was not only historically important, but also valuable, the group sought to keep it safe and secure. Following a call with the PAS Central Unit, it was decided to take the coins directly to the British Museum.

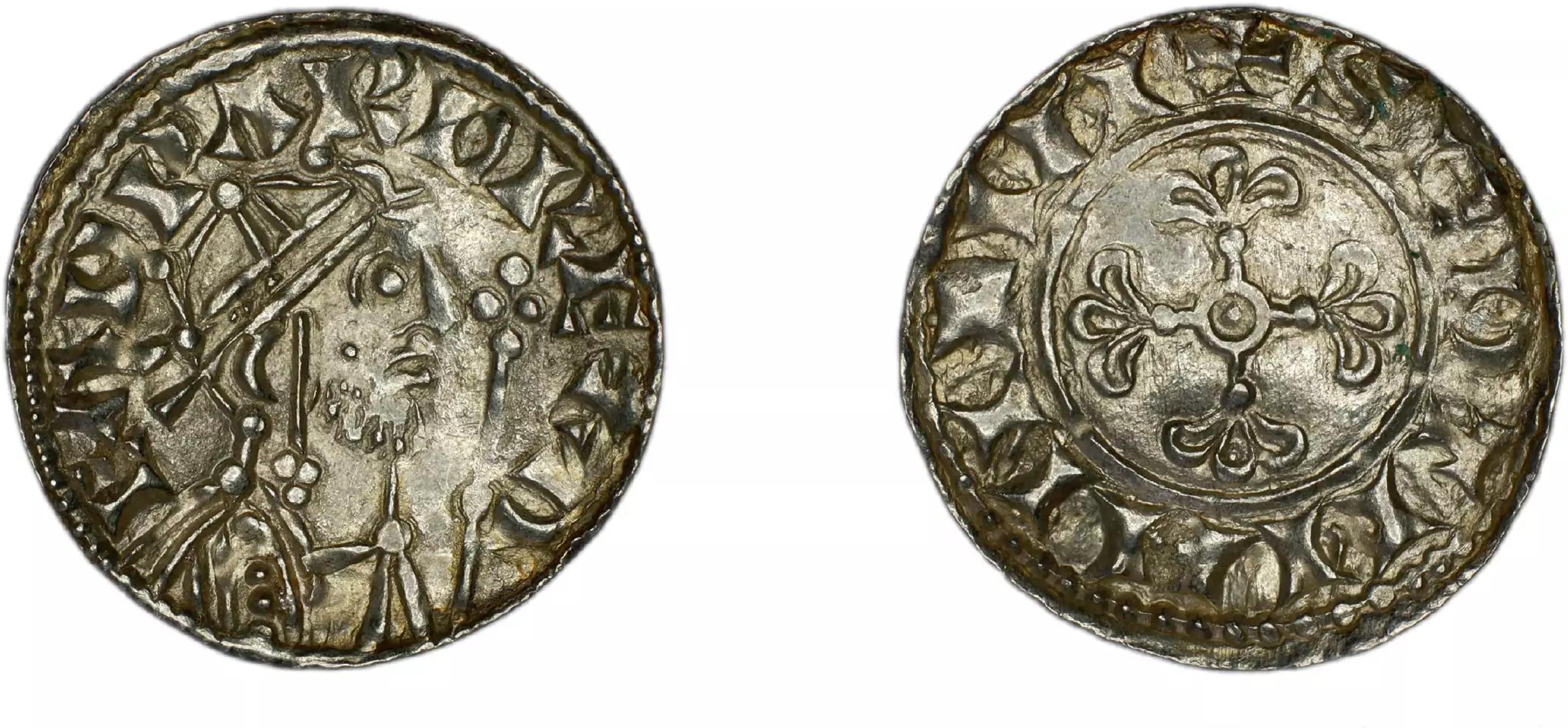
Conservation

Pippa Pearce, Senior Conservator at the British Museum, leads the conservation work on coin hoards reported as potential Treasure through the Treasure Act 1996. Every year, about 10 coin hoards are brought to the British Museum for cleaning and identification as part of the Treasure process. Most of these date to the Roman period, particularly to the third and fourth centuries, and are dominated by copper alloy coins.

So, there was something extra special for Pippa about the Chew Valley Hoard, as all the coins were silver, and good-quality silver at that. She recalls the very particular "tinkling noise" made by the silver.

Because of the hoard's significance, the conservators at the British Museum dropped what they were doing and worked on the coins over three days. Most of the coins were in good

***Below:* Chew Valley Mule of Edward and WilliamI: Mule blending coins of Edward 'the Confessor' and the Profile/Cross Fleury of William I**



BRITISH MUSEUM

SOUTH WEST HERITAGE TRUST

condition and only needed mud deposits to be carefully removed from their surfaces. A few pieces had their details obscured by thin crusts of stable green copper corrosion, which was removed using a chemical process. Almost all the coins were complete pennies – the typical denomination of the Medieval period, before and after the Norman Conquest.

The hoard also contained 'cut' pennies, which provided lower denominations; the terms half penny and quarter penny come from the physical cutting of whole pennies. There were also a few fragmentary coins, perhaps damaged by the plough.

Pippa agreed with the finders that most of the coins belonged to Harold II and William I, but also spotted some oddities that blended aspects of coins of both kings, as well as those of Edward 'the Confessor.'

Known as 'mules,' these coins were to intrigue Gareth Williams, then Curator of Early Medieval Coins at the British Museum, who was tasked with writing the report for the Treasure Inquest.

Above: Curator of Archaeology at the South West Heritage Trust, Amal Khreisheh. The Trust acquired the hoard on behalf of the nation

Cataloguing

An aspect of late Saxon and Norman coins that is helpful to curators in the identification process is that they are inscribed with the name of the moneyer (the official responsible for making the coin) and the place where the coin was minted.

The complexity in this task of identification is that the names of people and places are written using unusual letter forms. Old English characters such as Æ (á) and Đ (th) were used, and letters were often abbreviated.

The Treasure report listed 2,584 coins, including a small number of cut halves and damaged and fragmentary coins. Their total weight after cleaning was almost 3.4kg.

The issues were all of the 'PAX' (Peace) type of Harold II (1066) and the 'Profile/Cross Fleury' type of William I (1066-87), except for one mule of the 'Pyramids' type of Edward 'the Confessor' (1042-66) and the 'Profile/Cross Fleury' type of William I, and two of the 'PAX' type of Harold and the 'Profile/Cross Fleury' type of William I.

Around 100 moneyers and 46 mints are represented within the Chew Valley Hoard. The moneyers are some of the earliest named people known at particular places.

Gareth's report made some critical initial observations. While no container had been found, the coins provided evidence of some internal grouping, suggesting that the contents were deposited in multiple leather or textile bags. Gareth also suggested that the hoard might have been buried in 1067-70, perhaps in the middle of that period, linked to unrest in the southwest against William's reign.

The hoard contains three 'mules' – coins struck from two dies not originally intended for use together. This happened for a variety of reasons: The reverse die was handheld and the moneyer may have picked up an old die by accident; obverse dies last longer, so older ones may have been used with new reverses, which has happened here. This may have been to avoid paying a fee to acquire a replacement die, or simply because no new obverses were available at that mint.

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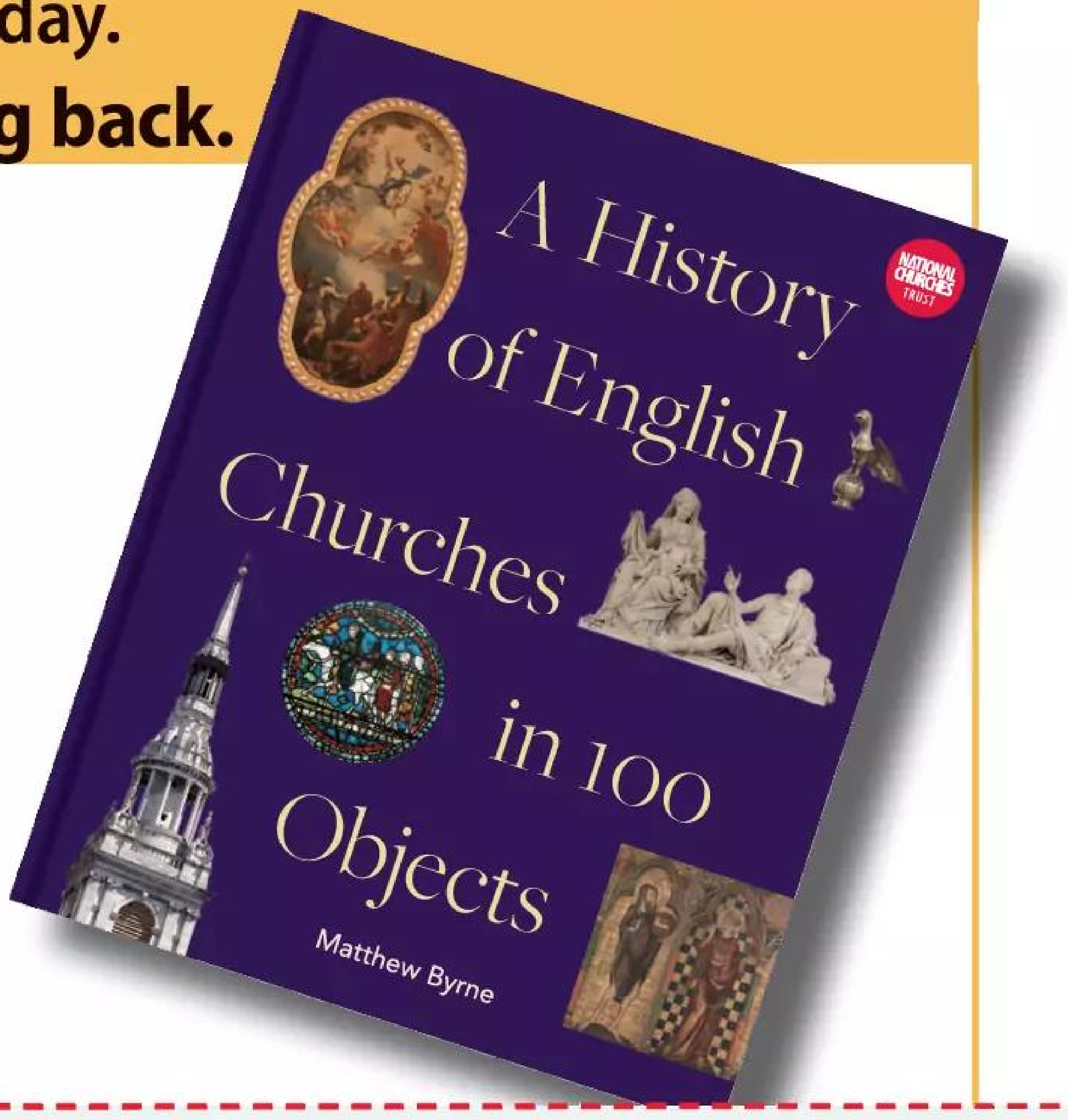

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BRITISH MUSEUM

Above: Wendy Scott, Curator of Hoards at the British Museum, places the coins in the display case. The coins can be seen in Gallery 2 at the British Museum until 27 May 2025.

An intriguing aspect was what these coins might be worth when originally buried. Some of the 2,500 odd pennies might not seem like a lot today, but in the 1060s, their high silver content made them valuable.

Gareth estimated that the hoard might have been "equivalent to the value of a flock of more than 500 sheep or the annual income of a medium-sized estate".

In short, it was an amount that its owner would need to keep safe, whether in a period of uncertainty or not. The enigma is why they never came back for it.

Acquisition

The hoard is one of the most remarkable finds reported under the Treasure Act 1996, administered by the Treasury Registry at the British Museum on behalf of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. In England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, anyone who discovers potential Treasure is legally obligated to report such items under the Treasure Act 1996.

The Chew Valley Hoard qualifies as Treasure because it contains two or more precious metal coins that are over 300-years-old. The Secretary of State accepted the Treasure Valuation Committee's recommendation of £4.3 million for the hoard's valuation.

It was the responsibility of South West Heritage Trust, on behalf of Somerset Council, to raise this money to be paid as a reward to the landowner and finders, who split the financial proceeds 50/50.

The acquisition was made possible thanks to the generous support of a £4,420,527 development grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and £150,000 from Art Fund. The South West Heritage Trust, Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, and the Friends of the Museum of Somerset provided smaller but vital amounts of funding.

Historical context and significance

In his report, Gareth Williams suggested that the Chew Valley Hoard might have been buried for safekeeping during the turmoil that followed the Battle of Hastings (14 October 1066) as William of Normandy struggled to maintain a hold on his new kingdom.

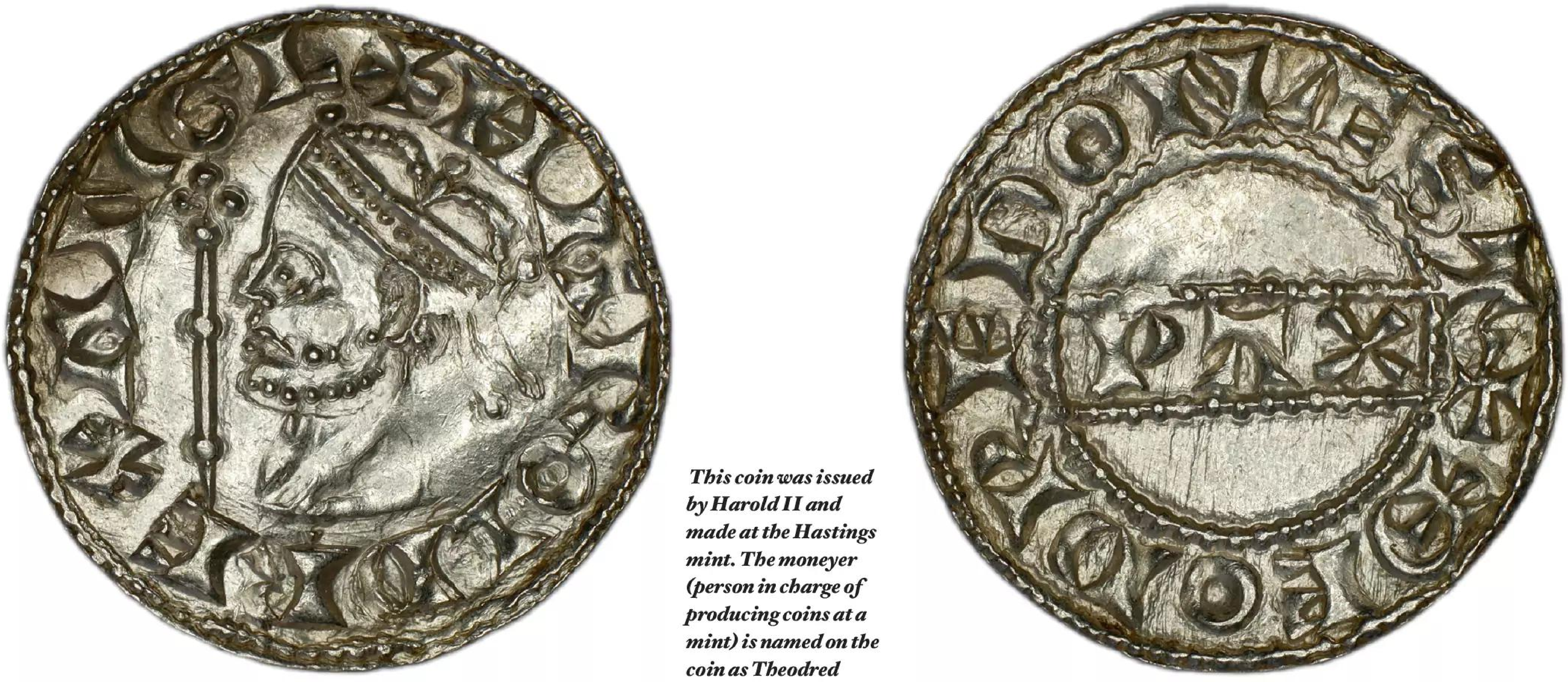
Contrary to what most children in England are taught at school, the Norman Conquest of England did not begin and end with the Battle of Hastings. Although King Harold II was killed, the English next grouped around his kinsman Edgar Ætheling. Edgar was the grandson of Edmund 'Ironside' and had been extracted from exile in Hungary by Edward 'the Confessor' and brought up to be 'throne-worthy'.

Edgar had been pushed aside by Harold 'Godwinson's' meteoric rise to power but now had his chance. He was proclaimed 'king' by the citizens of London but then submitted with the rest of the English nobility in early December at Berkhamsted, leading William to be crowned king of England on Christmas Day 1066.

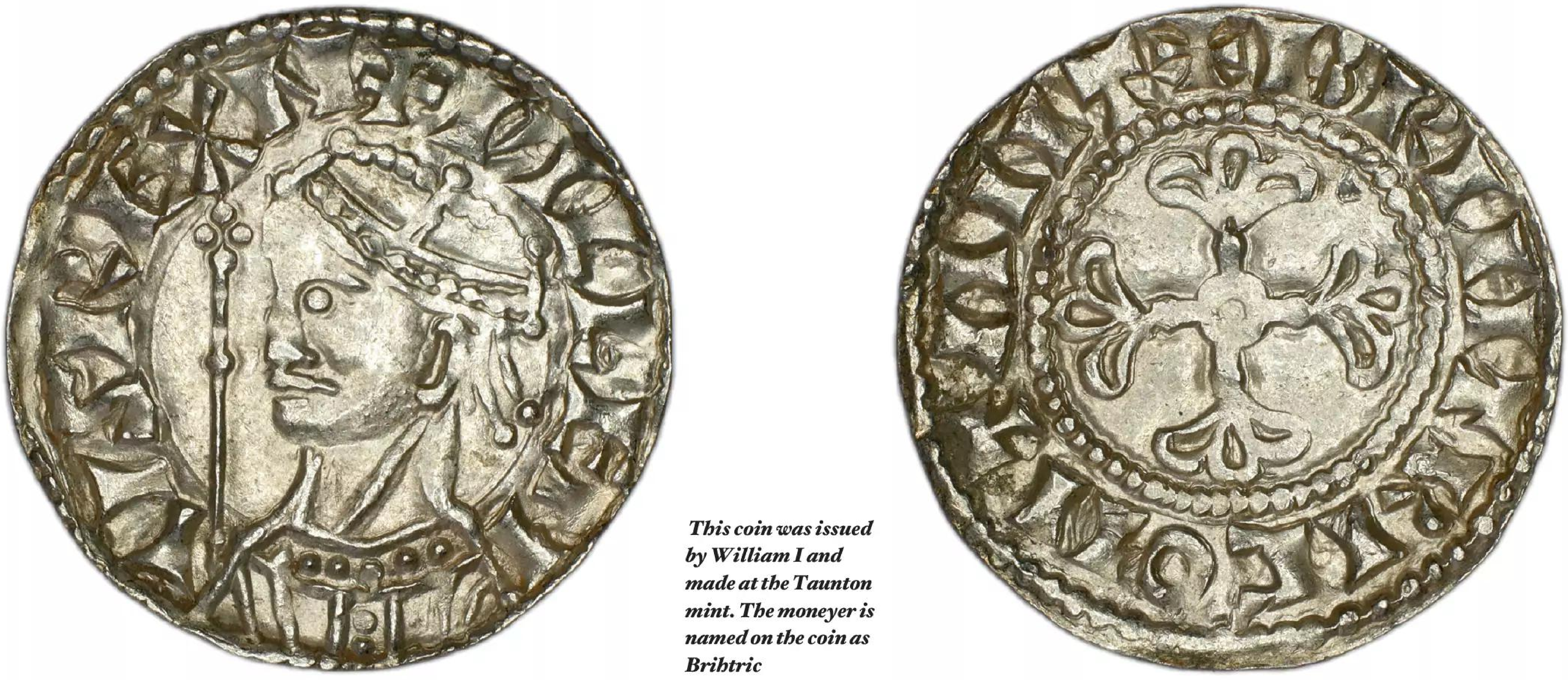
William's coronation did not go entirely to plan. When Norman soldiers outside Westminster Abbey thought adulations within "in a foreign tongue" were the start of a riot, they burned down local houses.

It was not a good start to the new regime, with the early twelfth-century chronicler Orderic Vitalis recording

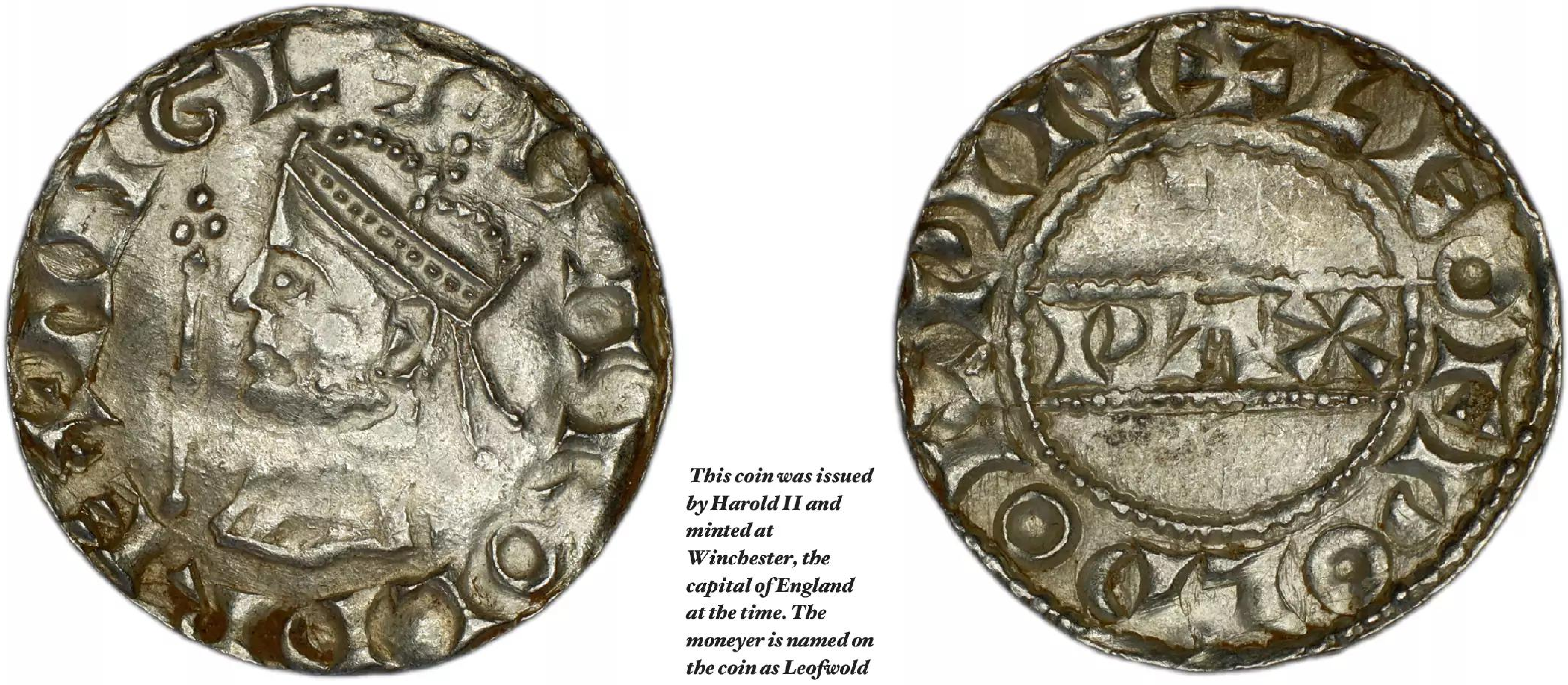
BRITISH MUSEUM [3]



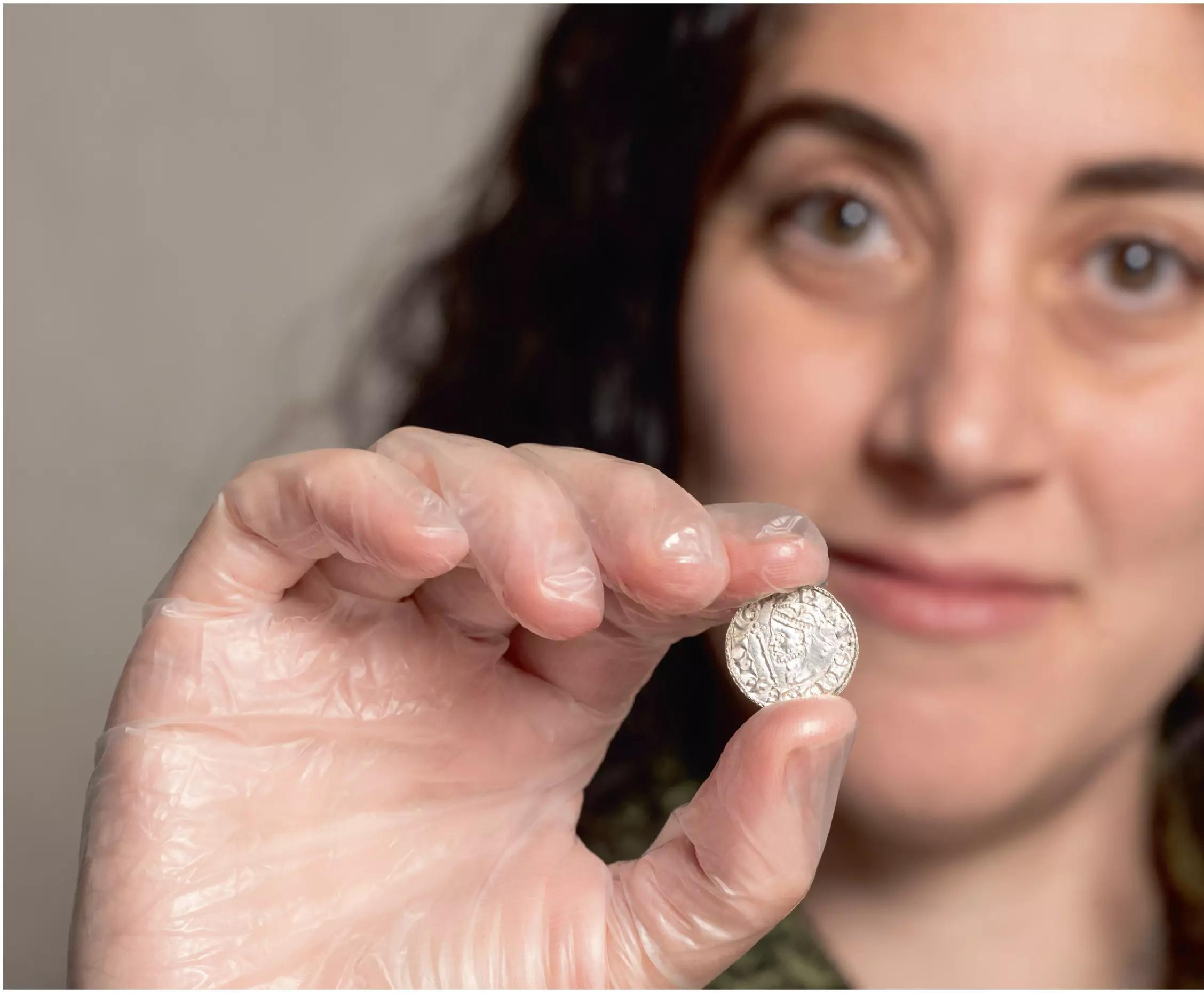
This coin was issued by Harold II and made at the Hastings mint. The moneyer (person in charge of producing coins at a mint) is named on the coin as Theodred



This coin was issued by William I and made at the Taunton mint. The moneyer is named on the coin as Brihtric



This coin was issued by Harold II and minted at Winchester, the capital of England at the time. The moneyer is named on the coin as Leofwold



SOUTH WEST HERITAGE TRUST

Above: SWHT's curator of Archaeology, Amal Khreisheh, holds one of the silver coins

that thereafter, the English 'never again trusted the Normans... but nursed their anger and bided their time to take revenge'.

In spring 1067, William took Saxon nobles, including Edgar, to Normandy, perhaps to get to know them better, but also to ultimately control them. Normans were left to govern the kingdom in his stead.

According to contemporary writers, and Orderic Vitalis, the injustice and suffering caused by their mismanagement of the kingdom led to the English plotting 'ceaselessly to find some way of shaking off a yoke that was so intolerable'.

England suffered from threats abroad and internal insurrection: Eustace of Boulogne, the former brother-in-law to King Edward, attacked and attempted to seize Dover Castle, Earl Copsi of Northumbria, a Saxon loyal to William, was brutally murdered, and Eadric 'of the woods', a known English resistor to Norman rule, joined the Welsh to lay waste to Herefordshire.

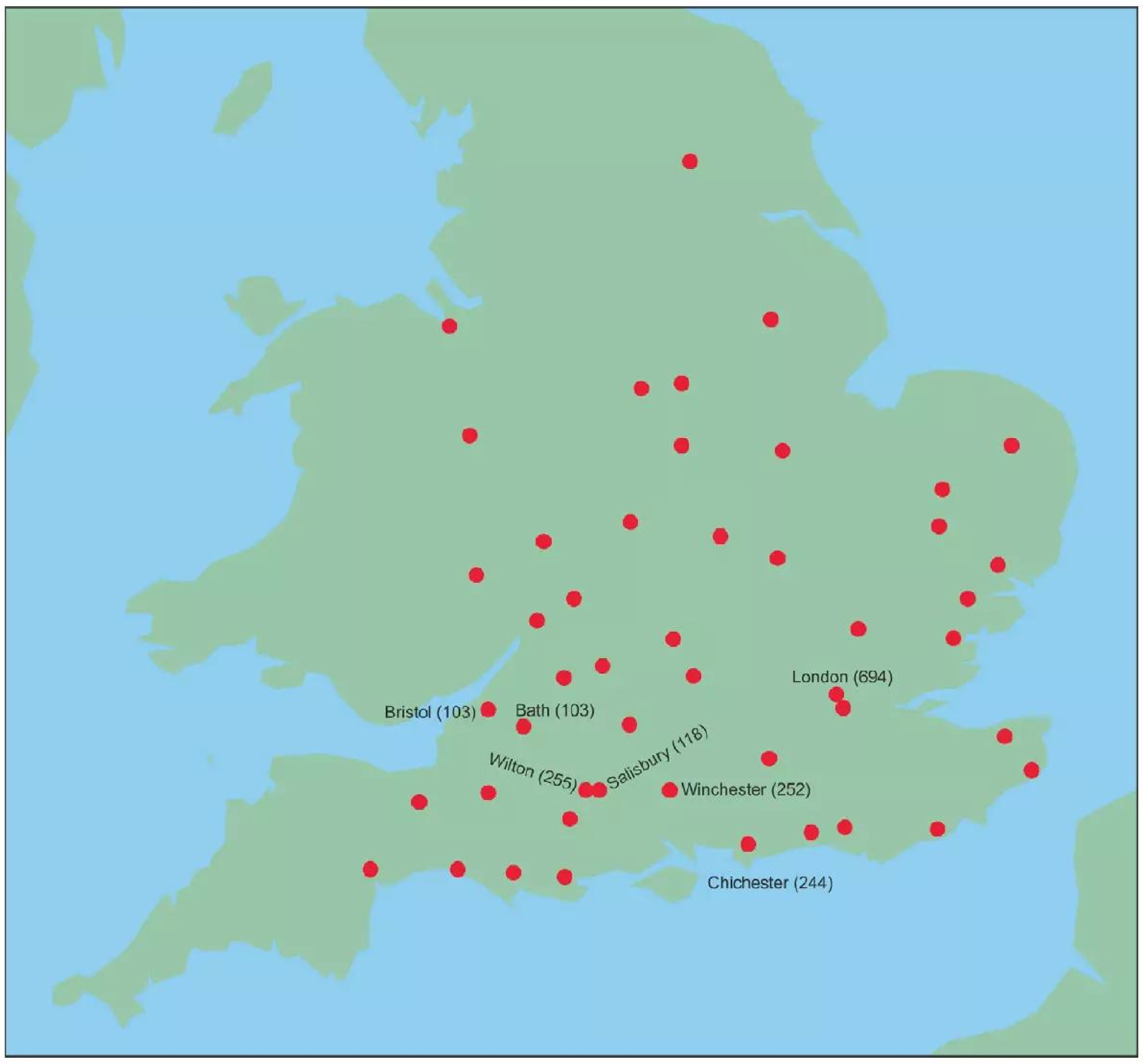
There were also rumours of an invasion from Denmark. It was by no means a concerted plan to overthrow William, but nonetheless, William returned to England in December 1067 to take charge of the situation.

Significantly, regarding where the Chew Valley Hoard was buried, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that in early 1068, "Exeter was the first town to fight for its liberty". This uprising was led by King Harold's mother, Gytha, who expected support from kin in Ireland. By mid-1068, Harold's sons - named in a later source as Godwine, Edmund and Magnus – travelled from Ireland to attack the southwest. They defeated Eadnoth 'the Staller,' a stalwart of King Edward, and 'took much booty from Devon and Cornwall'.

Elsewhere in the country, William was building castles to help subdue the English and even banned his knights from returning home - leaving them concerned about what their "lascivious wives" might get up to if they were away in England too long.

In early 1069, Edgar Ætheling, Edward the Confessor's closest blood relative and the last surviving member of the royal house of Wessex rebelled against the king, leading an army into York, a crucial Norman stronghold. William dealt with this harshly, and according to another later chronicler, Henry of Huntington, made 'great

Right: Map showing geographocal places with the largest areas of production of coins centres with more than a hundred mints



SOUTH WEST HERITAGE TRUST AND BRITISH MUSEUM

slaughter of the treacherous people', quashing the attack and forcing Edgar to flee to Scotland.

In the spring of that year, Harold II's sons again came to England, this time to Devon with 64 ships. They fought a great battle in 1069 against Brian, a Breton earl, and then returned to Ireland. About the same time, the men of Dorset and Somerset again rebelled against the Normans; in a two-pronged attack the Welsh along with the men of Chester besieged Shrewsbury and the men of Devon, aided by the Cornish, attacked Exeter.

Elsewhere, Danes were now proactively supporting key English rebels and even took control of York, killing 'many hundreds of Frenchmen'. The state of rebellion across the country was such that Orderic Vitalis noted that "everywhere the law of God was broken," lamenting the oppressive nature of the Norman state.

Unsurprisingly, in this context of societal breakdown, someone of status would bury their wealth in the ground, perhaps seeking out a special spot in the landscape rather than keeping it in a chest in their home.

Following the Conquest, the place where the hoard was buried belonged to Giso, Bishop of Wells, although he would have rented this land to tenants.

Display and research

The hoard symbolises a pivotal moment in English history and is a unique find for the southwest. The unprecedented acquisition, by the South West Heritage Trust, highlights the power of museums, heritage, and stories to inspire people and communities and has been made possible thanks to a wide range of partners working together.

Keeping the hoard in public ownership means its research potential can be realised and it can be made available for the public to enjoy. The initial display at the British Museum (26 November 2024 to 27 May 2025) will give national and international visitors a chance to see some of the coins from the hoard.

Temporary displays will follow at UK museums, including in Bath, before the hoard finds a permanent home at The Museum of Somerset. The Trust is making a further application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to support this. The bid will include a programme of engagement activity, such as talks and tours, volunteering opportunities, pop-up exhibitions (including in the Chew Valley), digital initiatives, and family activities.

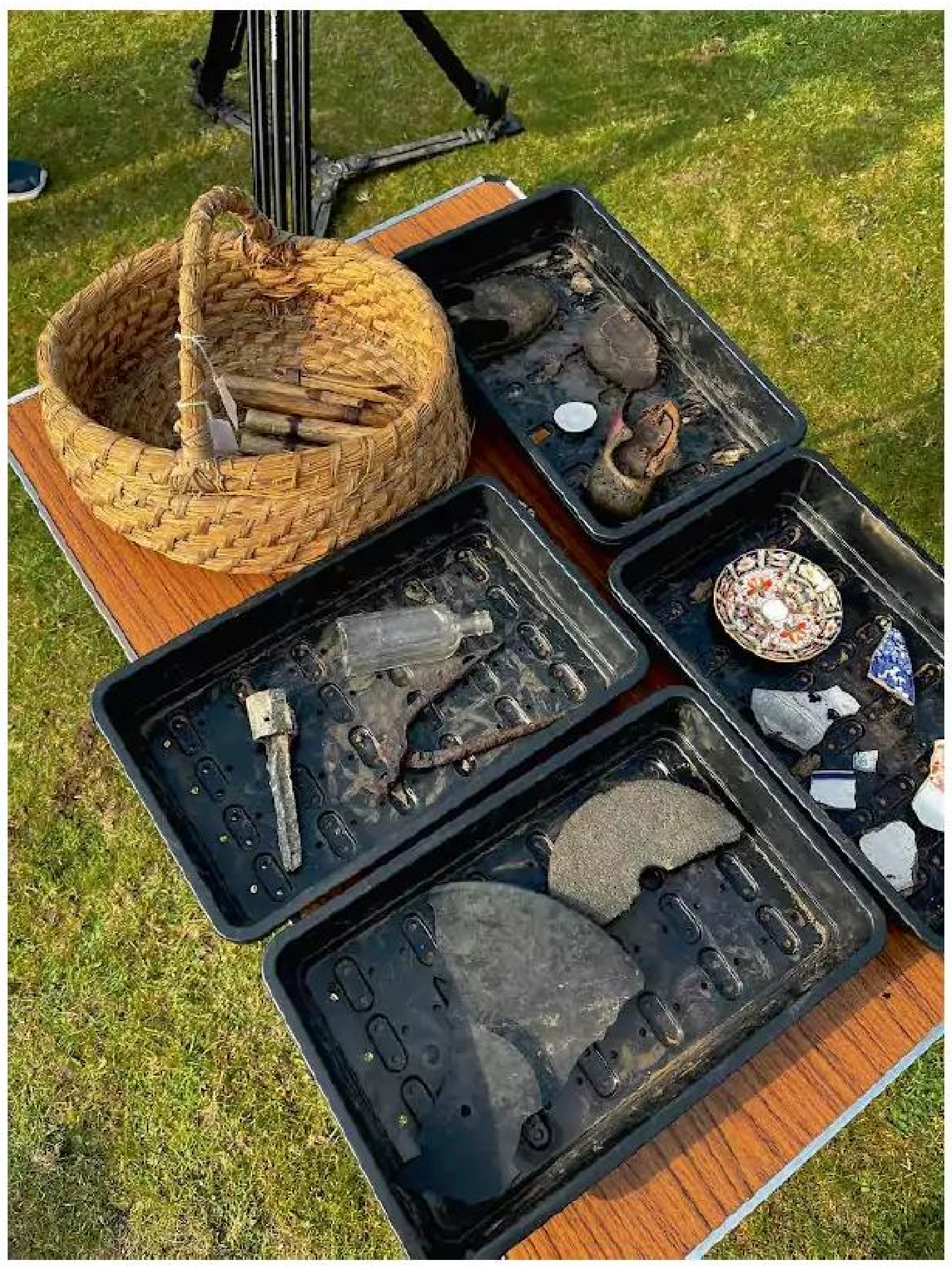
In collaboration with the British Numismatic Society, the British Museum, Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society and the University of Exeter, the South West Heritage Trust, will facilitate academic research into the hoard to reveal more about this turning point in English history.

With grateful thanks

The Chew Valley Hoard has been acquired for the nation by the South West Heritage Trust thanks to major funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund, alongside smaller but vital grants from the Friends of The Museum of Somerset and the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society.

The South West Heritage Trust also wishes to express thanks to Somerset Council, The British Museum, The Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and Bath and North East Somerset Council, who helped make the acquisition possible, and everyone so far involved in the understanding of the find. ■

The Romani Community Archaeology Project



ESZTER HALASI [CENTRE PIC]; ROMANI COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY [2]

Excavating the Thorney Hill Gypsy Rehabilitation Centre

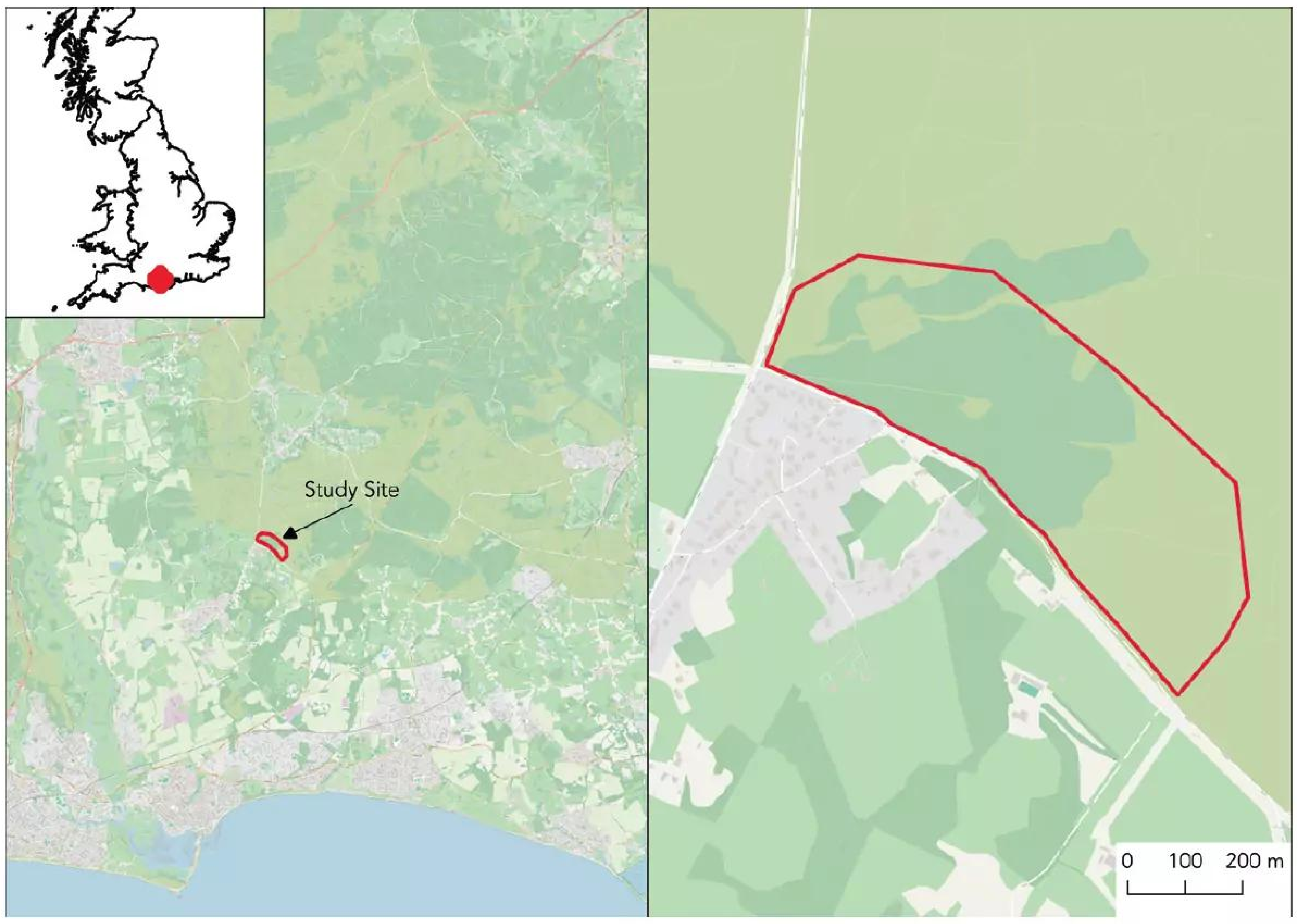
John-Henry Phillips, Kye Preston and Dr Stuart Eve – Romani Community Archaeology – share insights from recent excavations in the New Forest which uncovered the remnants of Thorney Hill compound, and the shocking discovery of a 'Gypsy Rehabilitation Centre'. It aimed to force the Romani community to live only in designated camps built in the 1960s as a means to coerce, marginalise, and discriminate.

Notes on nomenclature: The language used to describe the Romani is complicated and is dependent on which part of which communities you are coming from or describing. Throughout this article we use the term Romani to denote the worldwide ethnic group; Romany Gypsies is used to specifically denote the British Romani people (also known as Romanichal). We also use the historic terms Gypsy and Gypsies when discussing historical sources.

This article has been co-authored by members of Romani Community Archaeology: John-Henry Phillips, an archaeologist from a Romani background, gives his personal perspective on what it means to be Romani and working in archaeology today, Kye Preston, an undergraduate history student at Southampton University and direct descendent of one of the families housed at Thorney Hill, presents the history and evolution of the Gypsy compounds in the New Forest.

Dr Stu Eve, a professional archaeologist, and CEO of Wessex Archaeology, provides the archaeological context and initial results from fieldwork undertaken in September 2024. Many thanks are due to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Angus Harley of New Forest Heritage Centre, and all the many volunteers and community participants that have made this project possible.

***Opposite, l-r: Vinyl record, side D of Cream's* Wheels of Fire *album; an Ordnance Survey map showing the Gypsy Rehabilitation Centre; a selection of artefacts laid out for filming* Digging For Britain**



OPENSTREETMAP

Being a Romani archaeologist:

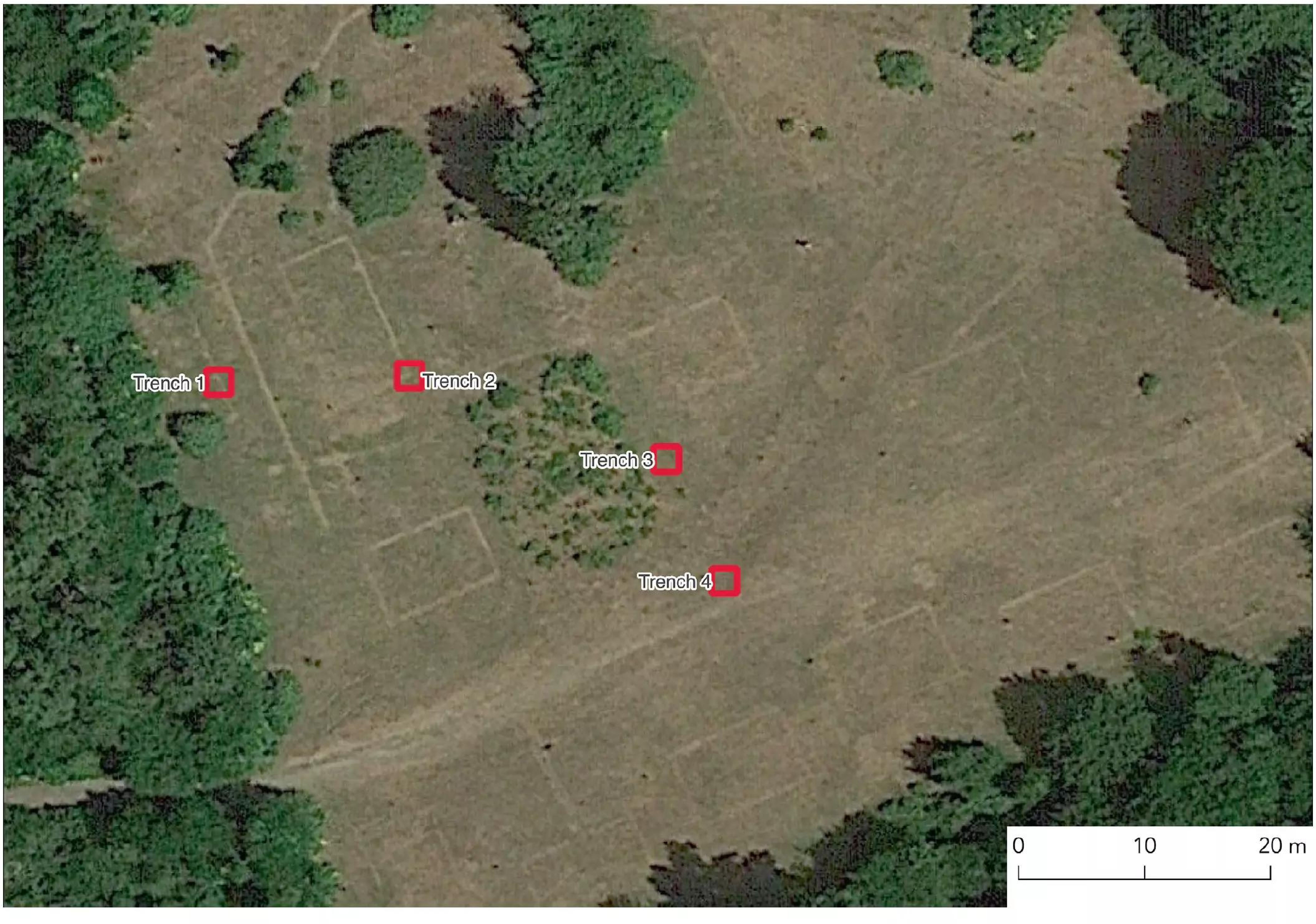
John-Henry Phillips

A few years ago, I read an academic article which stated that there had been no archaeology undertaken of Romani culture because there were no archaeologists from a Romani background.

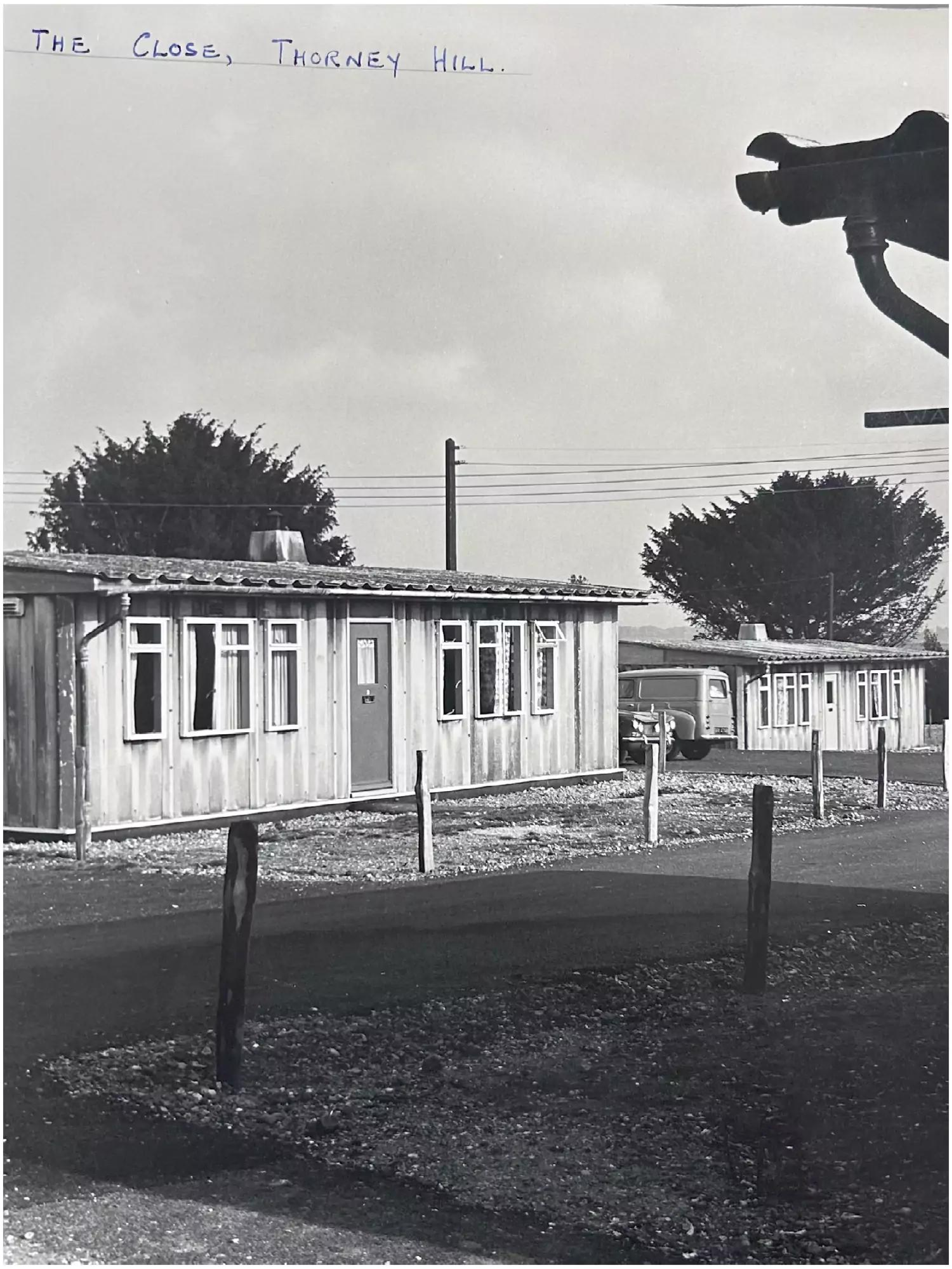
This statement, knowingly or not, was touching upon the long list of devastating statistics that permeate Romani communities across the globe: low educational attainment, low life expectancy, high suicide rates, high economic exclusion, and shocking levels of verbal and physical racist attacks, to name but a few.

With just 1% of people from a Romani background reaching university-level education, it is little surprise that were, as the article stated, no archaeologists from a Romani background – or at least none who were open about it; many Romani people working in all sorts of

Below: Test-pit locations overlaid on Google Earth image showing the parch marks of the Rehabilitation Centre, and (above) the study site location



GOOGLE EARTH



HAMPSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

Above: The prefabricated buildings at Thorney Hill

careers hide their ethnicity to try to minimise their experiences of what is commonly known as the "last acceptable form of racism".

But I am an archaeologist, and I am from a Romani background – something that I have never hidden and have always been extremely proud of, even during my years as a commercial archaeologist on building sites, forced to listen to a near daily barrage of anti-Gypsy racism on site.

I had, though, never brought my background into my career. It never seemed relevant to the work that I did. Then, in 2020, I was living in the Rocky Mountains in Canada, writing my first book about an expedition I ran to find a lost Second World War shipwreck. I had met many people out there, from vastly different walks of life, who expressed racist views towards First Nations people.

The statements, jokes, and victim-blaming attitude all rang so familiarly with what I, and anyone else from a similar background, had learned to accept as the norm when said about Romany Gypsies back home in the United Kingdom.

The government-instigated cultural genocide of the First Nations was, likewise, eye-opening, a similar experience to that of Romany Gypsies over the last five centuries. It was these realisations, along with a cultural shift towards discussions on racism in the aftermath of Black Lives Matter, and a final incident before boarding the plane back to the UK in which a British man who had emigrated to Canada told me that he had left Britain because there were 'too many Pikeys' – a racist slur as awful, offensive, and as traumatic as any other, that the idea to talk about my background in the context of my career was born.

I first approached the topic of Romani culture from a human rights perspective, even going as far as to earn a Master's degree in Human Rights, before working for various organisations, and addressing select committees in Parliament.

I wanted to do what I could to change what was possible. I soon found, however, that there are so many anti-Romani laws and endemic institutional and societal racism towards Romany Gypsies, further stoked by a vicious and exploitative media, that challenging any of it feels like running into a brick wall.

Every bit of traction you get in raising the issue of the lack of local authority Traveller sites, is instantly undone by a politician stating publicly with pride that he personally moves boulders in front of fields, or Jimmy Carr saying in a Netflix special to the cheers of a live audience that: 'When people talk about the Holocaust, they talk about the tragedy and horror of six million Jewish lives being lost to the Nazi war machine. But they never mention the thousands of Gypsies that were killed by the Nazis. No one ever wants to talk about that, because no one ever wants to talk about the positives.'

In contrast, I found that when I spoke about the beautiful culture of Romany Gypsies and contextualised the difficulties communities face today within the long history of our persecution in Britain, people seemed to listen.

Being an archaeologist, talking about history and culture is what we do day in, day out, and it soon became apparent that these two topics were one of the stronger tools in the human rights toolkit that we held.

The idea for Romani Community Archaeology came from that concept, and from the inspiring benefits to mental and physical health, skills building, and new opportunities in the heritage sector that co-founder Dr Stu Eve and I had both witnessed through our work on various military veteran-based projects.

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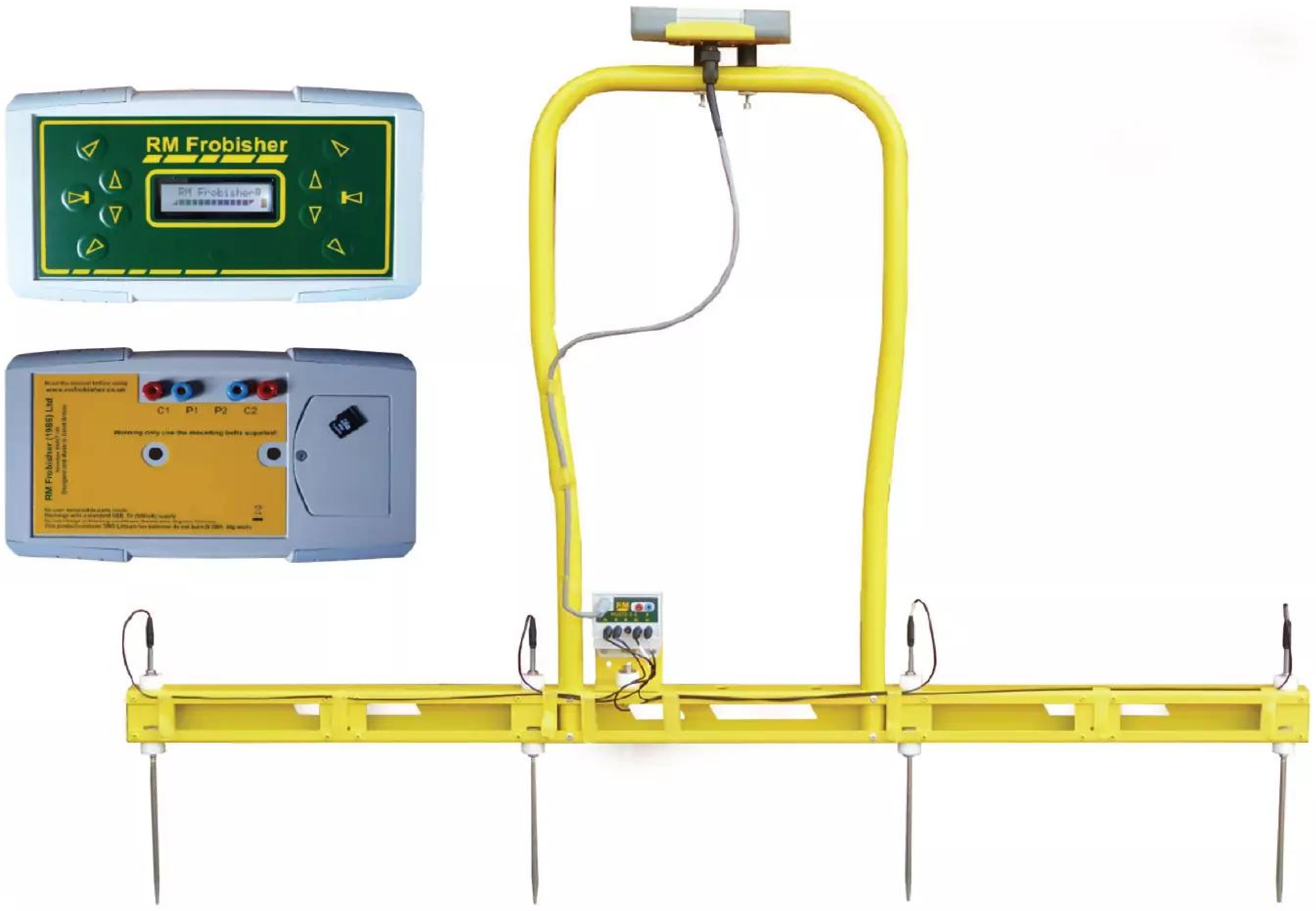

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Romani Community Archaeology was created to excavate historic Romani sites, alongside present-day Romani people.

For too long the story and narrative of the Romani people has been dominated by those outside of the community, and the project aims to change that. Although several Romani excavations had taken place in Europe, the aim for the project was for it to be the first of its kind in the United Kingdom.

The Romani

It is thought that Romani people began their migration from Northern India around 1500 years ago, travelling across the world, before arriving in the United Kingdom 500 years ago. Almost as soon as they arrived, Romani communities were targeted by the authorities and the public.

The *Egyptians Acts* of 1530 and 1554 (named after the incorrect assumption that, owing to their dark complexion, Romani people had arrived from Egypt) were not repealed until 1856, and were created to rid the realm of Romany Gypsies by forcing Romani people to abandon their 'naughty, idle and ungodly life and company'.

This was to be done by settling down and abandoning nomadism or leaving the country. Not doing so could be punishable by execution. Many Romany people were executed up until the 1660s, by which time Oliver Cromwell's government had begun to send Romany Gypsies to North America to be enslaved on plantations.

A regular roll-out of anti-Romany laws took place from then on, gradually stripping away the rights of Romany people in an attempt to wipe the culture from the country.

These laws never did see the United Kingdom rid itself of what it deemed the 'Gypsy Problem.' Romany communities, instead, existed on the peripherals of society, clawing back autonomy and a form of nomadic economy through traditional cultural traits such as fortune telling and tea reading, horse trading, and the selling of crafts such as wooden pegs, flowers, and lace.

The laws did, however, make life for Romany Gypsies increasingly difficult, while setting in place the seeds of systemic issues, the results of which still impact Romani people born today.

By the twentieth century, brief periods of general acceptance of the nomadic economy of Romany Gypsies occurred in the aftermath of the world wars, when hands were desperately needed to rebuild the country.

By the end of the 1950s, as post-war Britain was finding its feet, the centuries-old way of life was no longer seen as viable to those in charge.

The *Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960*,stripped away the majority of remaining rights to nomadism and closed traditional stopping places in use for centuries, and while the *Caravan Sites Act 1960* saw the Government building a number of permanent Traveller sites, this obligation was soon repealed, creating a chronic shortage of places for Romany Gypsies which remains one of the biggest issues still facing the community today.

It is within this history of targeted legislation that the site that Romani Community Archaeology planned to excavate sits: one of the former Romany Gypsy compounds built within the New Forest, at Thorney Hill, close to the village of Bransgore.

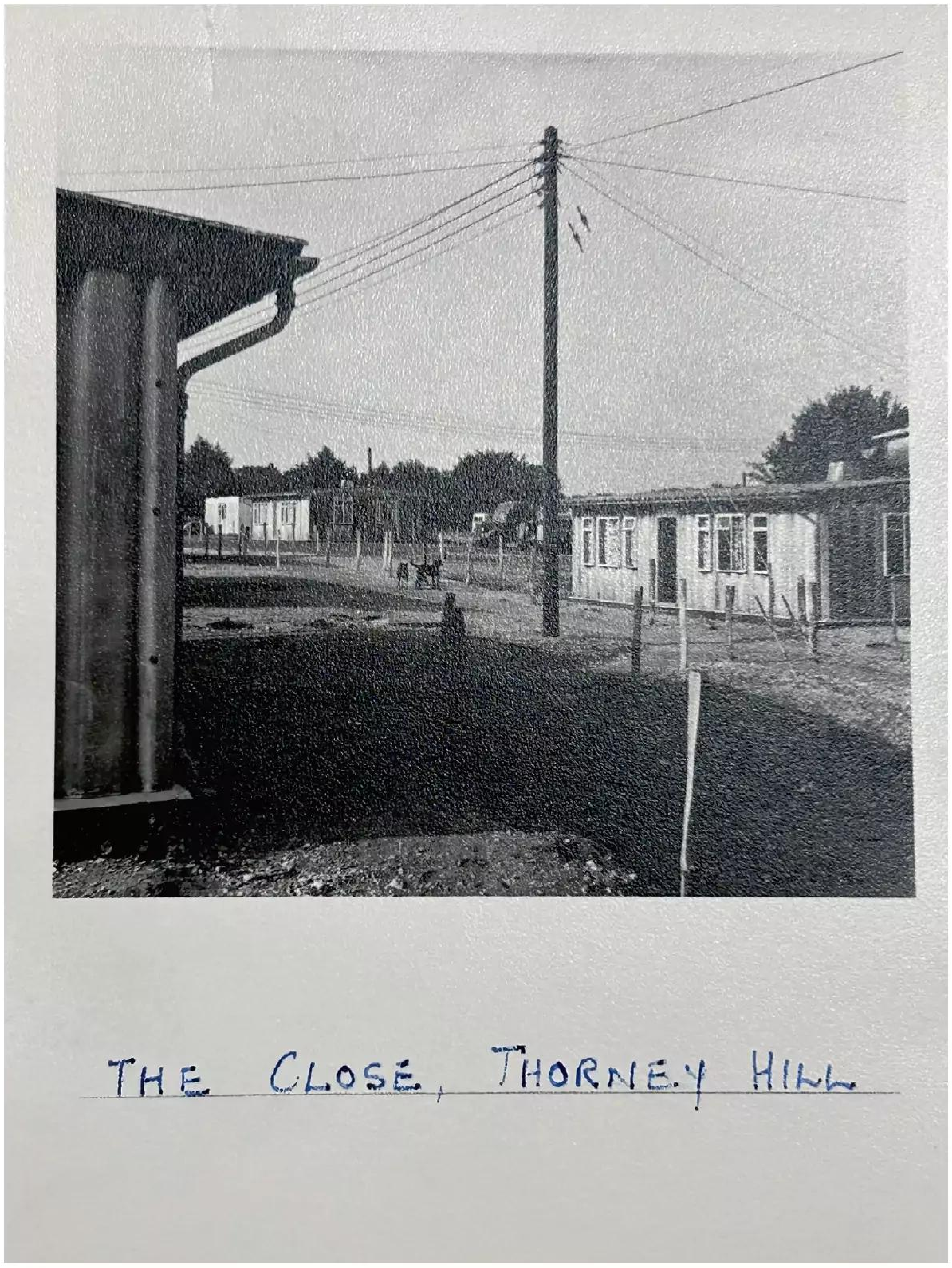
The Thorney Hill 'Gypsy Rehabilitation Centre'

Kye Preston

The New Forest has long been a place of great beauty and mystique, attracting visitors in droves, but the twentieth century brought considerable change to the area. A rapid increase in tourism, urbanisation and easy access from London by train meant that the forest Gypsies - inhabitants and in many ways, keepers of the land for over 500 years – were the targets of a new "problem" for local authorities.

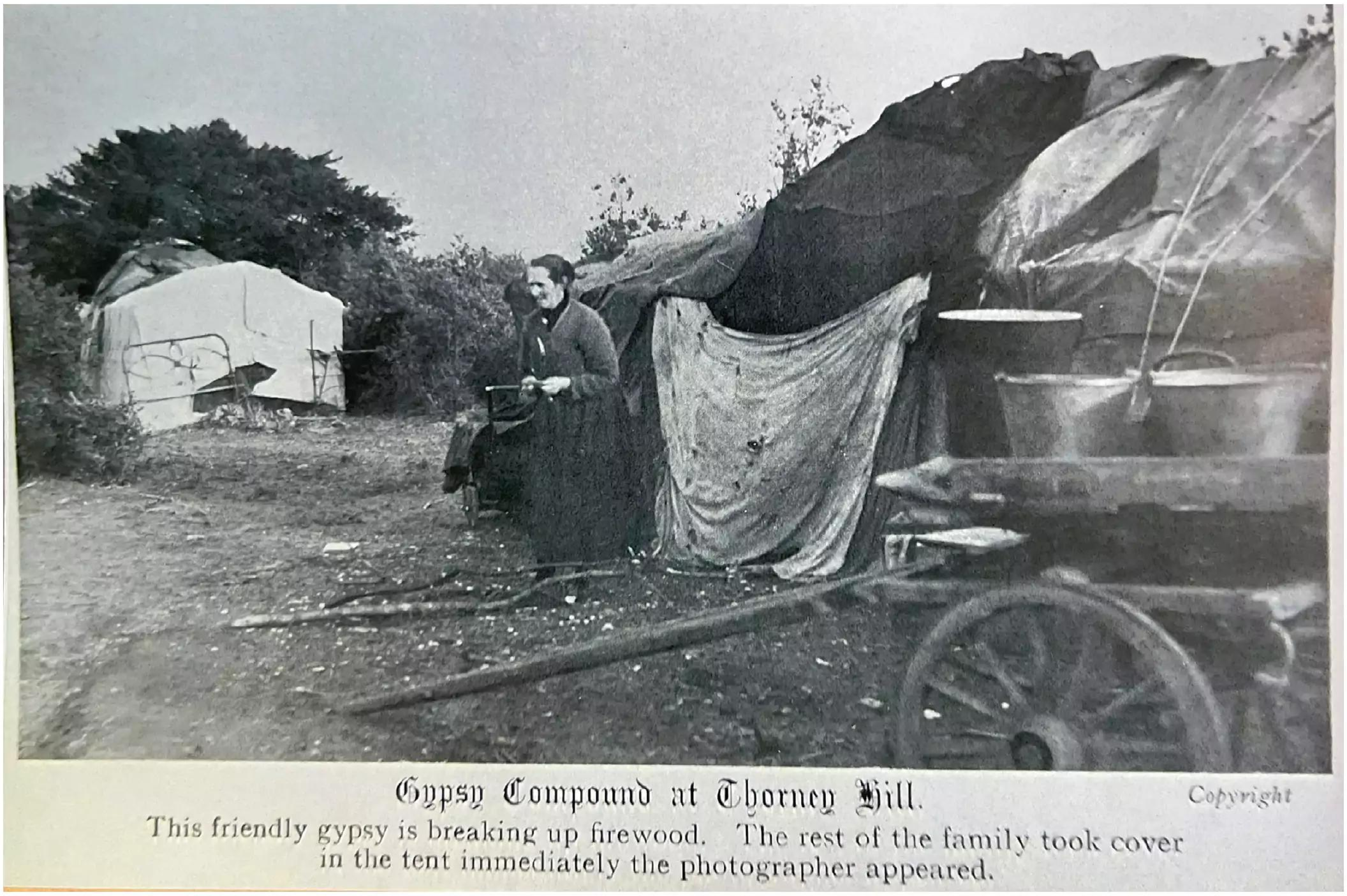
It was no longer deemed appropriate for Romany Gypsies to travel throughout the forest, living and working off the land, camping together in small temporary camps that left little trace. Instead, they would need to be dealt with.

The answer, initially, was to force Romany Gypsies living in the forest into seven compounds from 1926 onwards. These compounds, in which permanent structures, floors, or windows were not allowed, were now the only places



HAMPSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

***Right:* Another view of the prefabricated buildings at Thorney Hill**


Gypsy Compound at Thorney Hill.
Copyright
This friendly gypsy is breaking up firewood. The rest of the family took cover in the tent immediately the photographer appeared.

THE CHRISTOPHER TOWER LIBRARY AT THE NEW FOREST HERITAGE CENTRE

Above: Thorney Hill 1946: A postcard showing the Gypsy Compound at Thorney Hill

Romany Gypsies were allowed to exist within the forest and while originally residents of the compounds were allowed to move between the sites, each compound was eventually locked down and families no longer allowed to travel.

Stripping away the nomadic element of Romani culture and rounding people into compounds meant that their nomadic economy and seasonal work ceased, poverty increased, and the situation for those within the compounds rapidly deteriorated.

By 1947, the compounds were becoming an issue that could no longer be ignored by the authorities who had created them, and the Forestry Commission decided it had to modernise the forest. A committee was established, whose findings, colloquially known as the *Baker Report*, made recommendations for the adjustment of the region.

As part of this, local officials visited the compound at Thorney Hill. Their visit prompted an entire section of the report to debase Romany culture as equivalent to the 'Stone Age'. The justification for this was that the Gypsies lived in unfavourable conditions, with little access to clean water or proper sanitation facilities; at one point a single water tap was shared between 400 people.

There was no mention of the fact that the compound system was a device implemented by the Council in the first place, and that everything they perceived as wrong with the area was in fact a result of an initial lack of governmental assistance 20 years previously.

The report made suggestions for how to deal with what they saw as a 'stain on the welfare state', including the removal of the Gypsies, 'to some place at least five miles distant from the perambulations of the forest'.

If this wasn't practical, then the Council would construct hutted accommodation on the site of the compound. This residential area would be staffed by a warden, who would live in a 'superior type of hut'.

The 'experiment' that the committee agreed on would 'reclaim these people and grade them up to a normal mode of life'. The way they would do this was to provide a site which would educate them in 'ordinary' living standards, with the intention that they then 'graduate to council houses' and 'become tenants in the ordinary way'.

Immediately following the *Baker Report*, the council worked to force this transition without the need for their 'experimental camp' to take shape by building houses and offering them to the local Gypsies. By this time, several Gypsy families were also living adjacent to Thorney Hill at nearby Holmsley, using the former RAF accommodation, or Nissen huts, as shelter.

Very quickly, Thorney Hill went from a small, isolated village with little housing or amenities to a substantially populated village equipped with its own shop and working men's club. The urban expansion facilitated the movement of the Gypsies by giving them an alternative to the wartime shelters and compound, which were becoming increasingly hard to live in.

In 1959, a separate committee group, the Association of Parish Councilsiii, proposed that the solution to the 'Gypsy problem' lay in aligning them with the 'established principles of our progressive civilisation'.

This built on the *Baker Report* by emphasising the need to educate the Gypsy community in what they considered to be 'normal standards' of living. They hoped that having understood that the 'Gypsy way of life was closing in', parents would voluntarily offer their children to education services and begin a process of assimilation by their own means.

The report itself specifically stated the desire for the 'gradual assimilation of the adult population' into dominant visions of lifestyle and living arrangements.

This committee meeting drew the same conclusions as the *Baker Report*, stressing the potential need for a specially designed camp in which the Gypsies could be taught how to live. Plans for a rehabilitation centre were taking shape between 1947-1959, but nothing was put forward formally at this time other than the reports of the two committees.

The recommendation of the parish committee put forward a vision for 'simplified type housing' that would provide a 'step' between compound and permanent housing. The simplified housing would act as the mediator between the two, educating the gypsies in conventional living and therefore giving them a better chance of adapting to living in permanent council accommodation.

In November 1962, the *Southern Evening Echo* ran the title '£15,000 camp to be built for Gypsies'. It reported on the plans for 'intermediate sites' in which 'rehabilitation' could take place. The Gypsies who would be moved onto this camp would be supervised by resident wardens and a social worker.

The paper observed how the current compound site was 'a cross between a car breaker's yard and a municipal rubbish dump.' The county alderman said in the same extract that it was 'deplorable that there should be 79 children whose parents are denying them the great privilege of education'. However, the Gypsies were 'breeding quicker than they're being housed so the problem is not diminishing'.

In the same year, a Forestry Commission memo claimed that the movement of Gypsy families between forest, rehabilitation centre and council house would act as a 'purge' of younger Gypsies. Its specific target was those who were 'commencing to raise families, which they do so with frightening rapidity.'

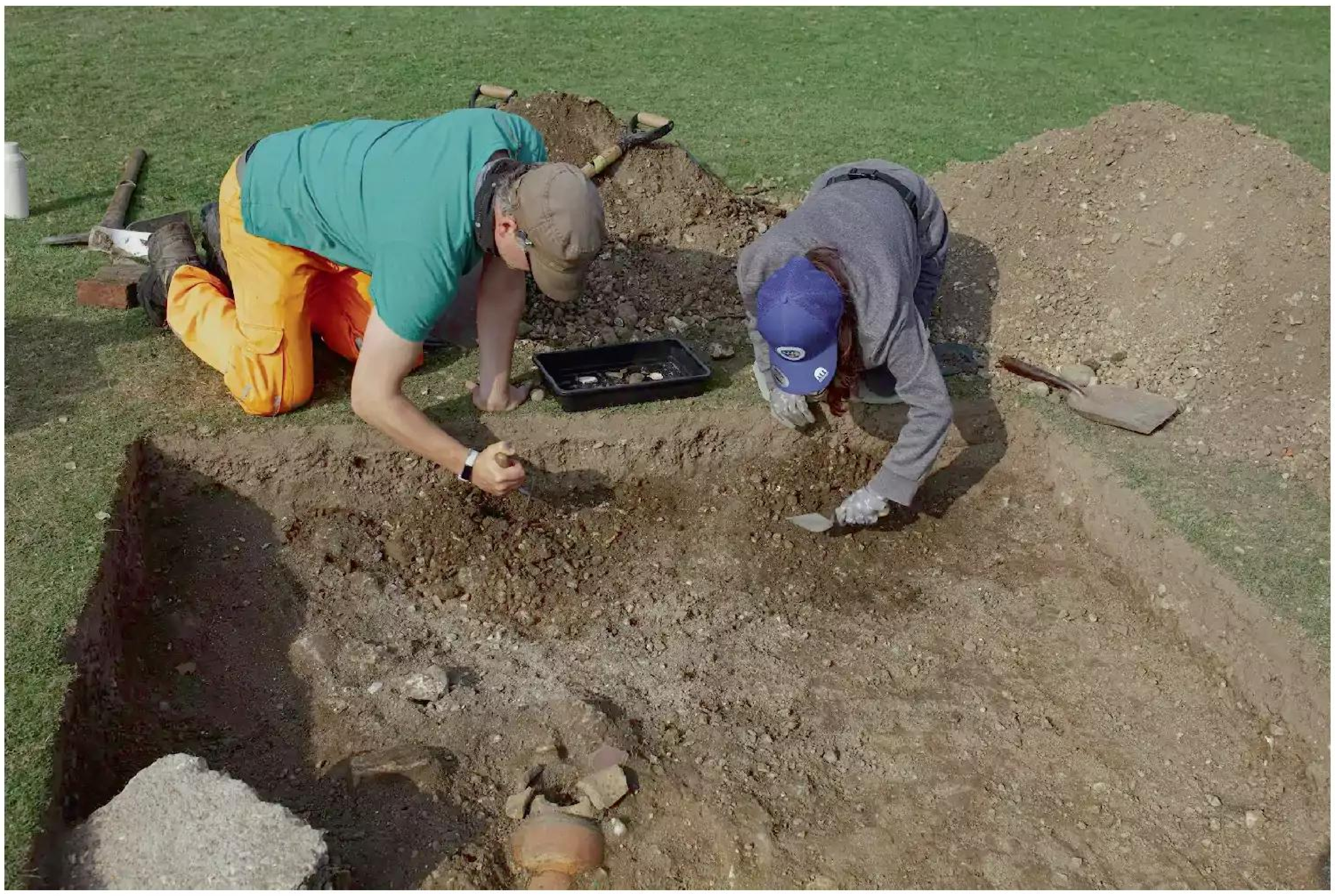
The rehousing (which was originally written on the memo as 'elimination') of younger Gypsy families aimed to disrupt hereditary principles by ensuring that newly born Gypsy children were raised in a bricks and mortar environment, thus preventing the continuity of nomadism, essential to Gypsy identity.

There was a great deal of interest in what Hampshire were planning. They attracted the attention of most British counties, who all made inquiries into how they were attempting to solve their problem. Among those seeking an insight were civil liberty groups and the United Nations Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, who wrote directly to Hampshire County Council for a progress report.

The construction of the site itself gained public traction – in December 1963, a Quaker work camp wrote to the county welfare officer in the hope that the site building could be run as part of their voluntary international work camp placements. Sourcing the design elements for the site dominated 1963, as the council spent most of the year inspecting various temporary accommodation sites in the Southampton area.

Eventually, they settled on using type 3 universal prefabs, a design dating back to the war, because of how easily they could be assembled and disassembled. The Thorney Hill site cost £19,206, substantially more than the £15,000 the *Southern Evening Echo* had speculated, which covered the foundation work, electrics, ground levelling, and the supply and erection of the prefabs.

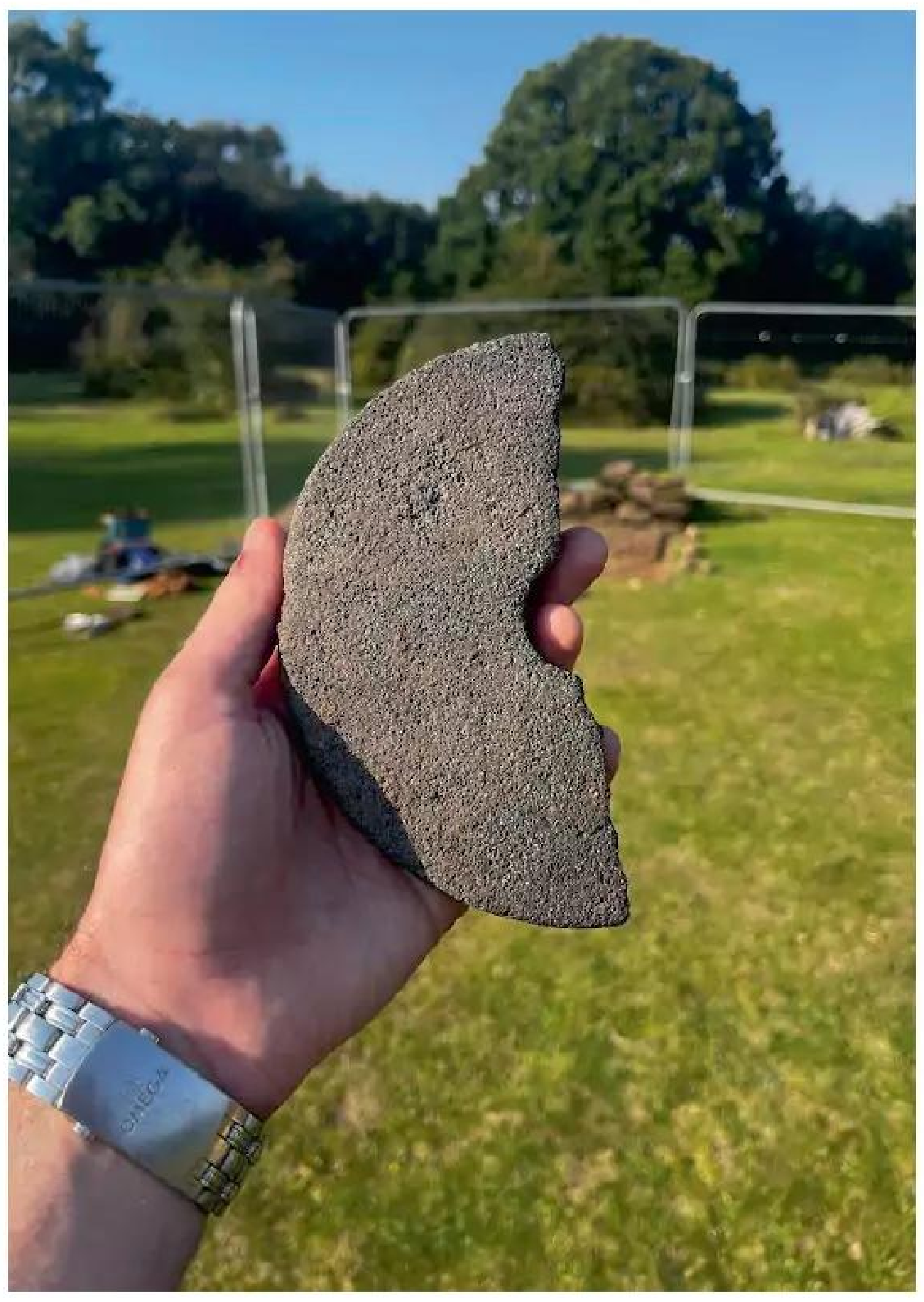
The site opened in the summer of 1964, with the first family moving in on 26 July . The site consisted of 15 prefabricated homes, 12 of which were to be given to families living in the nearby

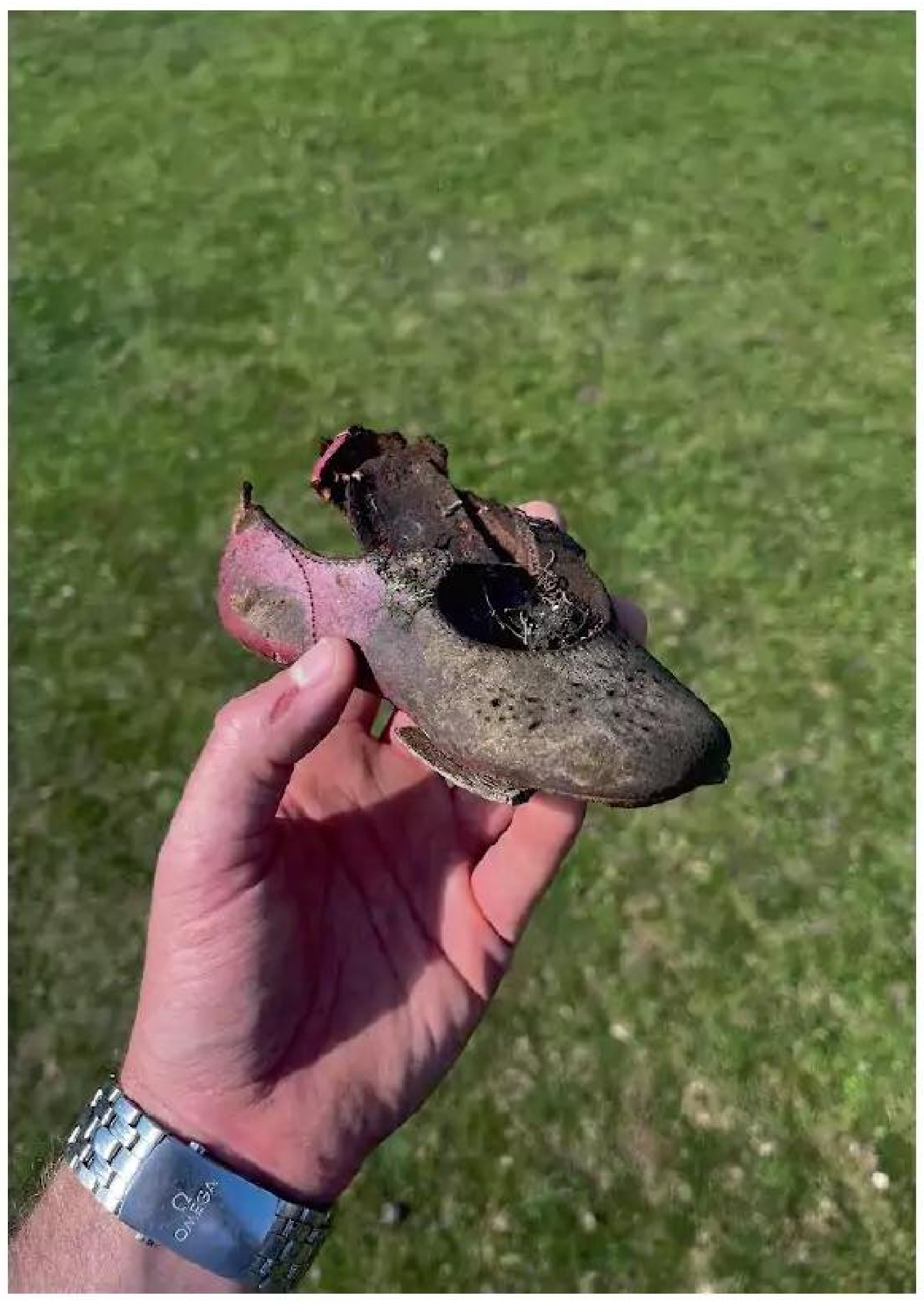

EZSTER HALASI

***Above:* Archaeologist Dr Stu Eve and archaeology student Katie Whitcher uncover a sewage pipe, from which soil samples were taken to try to confirm stories of parasitic disease within the Gypsy Rehabilitation Centre**

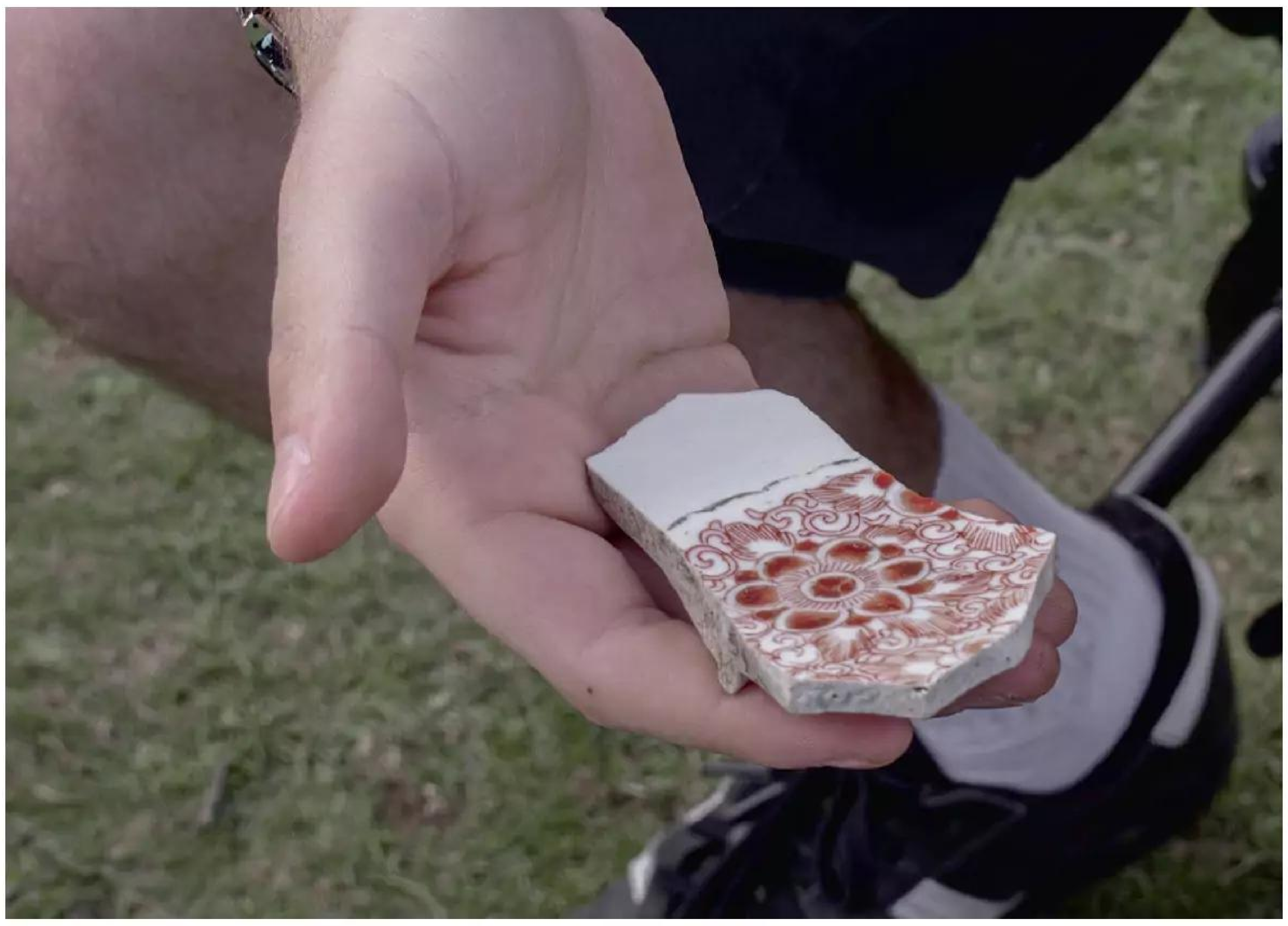
***Far right:* A child's shoe found while fieldwalking**

***Right:* The knife sharpening stone from a traditional Romany Gypsy knife sharpening cart, found while fieldwalking**




ROMANI COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY [2]

Right: A fragment of Imari porcelain imported from Japan in the later 1800s/early 1900s. Royal Crown Derby now manufacture the 'Old Imari' line for the Romany Gypsy market



ESZTER HALASI

Below: An empty bottle of Sloan's Liniment, used for massaging horses

Right: A silver hat or tie pin excavated from a sealed context

ROMANI COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY [2]

Gypsy compound to slowly introduce them to settled housing.

The purpose of the site was to educate Gypsy families on the qualities of stable, orthodox work, cleanliness, and living standards to prepare them for bricks and mortar living. The site was the first of its kind in England, the blueprint for multiple more sites of the same design in Hampshire at Headley Down, Yateley, and Rownhams, which were built in the following years. The other 11 residents followed in August of the same year. There were two wardens that looked after the 12 families, with a social worker also involved to aid the families in their transition.

In these early months, great emphasis was placed on the furnishing of these properties. The wardens started a scheme in which the Gypsies built their own fences around their prefab for their gardens, and any monies collected from the purchasing of household items such as curtains, floor coverings, or bedding would be put into a community fund, to be regenerated back into the site.

There was also a weekly rent, £1. 10s. 0d., which contributed to site maintenance. Each family was provided with basic services, including regular refuse collection and delivery services from the local milkman, butcher, and newsagent. The warden's primary role was to grade the Gypsies against a set of criteria which would deem them 'suitable for council accommodation':

1. Regular employment maintained by the head of the household
2. Satisfactory domestic standards in the home
3. Satisfactory personal standards – dress, cleanliness, manner
4. Regularity of children's school attendance
5. Good neighbourliness
6. Regular payment of rent.

Only once families reached these criteria would they be permitted a council house. Partners were encouraged to marry in the conventional way, and the men were guided towards stable jobs by the warden.

A community hall was added onto the site as an extension in the summer of 1965. This space was to be used for a youth club and a Sunday school to further the goal of community education. Progress over the next few years was slight. There was constant monitoring of the families, with a June 1968 progress report claiming that 'the gap is narrowing and there is no backsliding'. They considered there to have been 'tremendous progression' in relation to the 'shacks and dilapidated caravans that existed there before'.

However, a welfare report of 1970 stated that the rehabilitation process was not easy, and the Gypsies had not responded to the 'expert help, advice and guidance prior to their promotion into the community by way of council housing' in the way the council would have liked them to.

Only half of the original 12 families had been rehoused within those first four years, and even then, two of those had been admitted back into the centre for further 'training' after a period in council houses, making the net total of rehabilitated families four out of a possible 12.

By the end of the 1970s, the rehabilitation centre had closed, and by 1979 no structures remained. It remains unclear just how the scheme ended, but it is undeniable that the council were successful in their plans by the time the site was demolished.

Council houses now lined the parameters of the village and there was no evidence to suggest any Gypsies still lived off the land there. The Gypsies had been forced out of the forest, pushed under the guise of welfare into prefabricated houses and made to assimilate into bricks and mortar.

Some, the council claimed, wanted this shift. Most, however, had no choice but to comply. Centuries of persecution and relentless law-making had made nomadic living an impossibility owing to both systematic discrimination and social marginalisation.

Nomadic living had come to an end in the New Forest as a result of the rehabilitation scheme, and the descendant communities of those moved into council houses face many systemic

ESZTER HALASI [2]

Above: Archaeology student Katie Whitcher excavates with volunteers Louise Cash and Destiny Cash

inequalities today that are a direct result of the compound system and the rehabilitation centre.

Archaeology and the Romany Gypsies

Dr Stu Eve

Although Romany Gypsies have been an integral part of the UK population for centuries, there have previously been no direct archaeological investigations of Romany sites.

Traditionally nomadic, Romany Gypsy sites could perhaps be considered difficult to find, however, the signs of Romany culture can be seen in the landscape to those who know what to look for: 'Gypsy Lanes', 'Tinkers Woods', 'Gypsy Graves' are marked on Ordnance Survey maps, elaborate headstones found in cemeteries, and the more recent, violent architecture of trees and concrete blocks dragged in front of lanes to prevent stopping.

Traditional nomadic Romany stopping places also have the potential for archaeological investigation. Particular sites and places were often returned to year after year, and horse fairs have taken place in the same locations for centuries.

The site at Thorney Hill was originally a traditional stopping place, before being converted to the Gypsy Rehabilitation Centre, and was eventually abandoned and demolished in the late 1970s. The site was ideal for us to use as a pilot project, having the full history of Romany occupation, as well as the descendants of the original occupants living in close proximity.

Right: The saucer from a child's toy tea set, found while fieldwalking

We had always conceived of this project as a community-led project and following an initial picnic with the local community members to ensure their willingness to work with us, we were able to win National Lottery Heritage funding to start work on the site alongside the descendent community.

The archaeological project took place in September 2024 and consisted of the excavation of four small (2x2m) trenches and limited fieldwalking in the local area. Following consultation with Forestry England, New Forest District Council, and the Verderer's Court, the trenches were located according to aerial photographs taken in the hot summer of 2020. Parch marks clearly showed the locations of the prefabricated houses of the Rehabilitation Centre.

Trench 1 was placed over what would turn out to be the remains of a large building to the west of the compound. The aerial imagery showed this to be a slightly different design to the other buildings. A participant named Bronc, whose parents were born in the compound, remembered a community hall once standing where the trench was located, and subsequent research revealed that such a building was constructed a year later than the rest of the site to act as a community centre.

A single line of concrete foundations was uncovered in the trench, at approximately 50cm below the surface, with excavation being halted after the initial clean-up, due to the presence of asbestos tiling (presumably used as roofing or wall-coverings).

Trench 2 was placed over the corner of a suspected building, labelled on the compound plan as a bungalow with an extra bedroom. The excavation revealed both the inside and the outside of the building, although the foundations themselves were grubbed out, with only large concrete fragments remaining. The flooring had been removed, with only the compacted surface beneath the floor present.

A number of finds were recovered from this trench, including a Max Factor lipstick (according to one participant the local girls used to work in the Max Factor factory in Bournemouth); a hat or tie pin; various wires and electronics (perhaps related to the electrics of the building); and ceramic and brick remains.

In addition, a sewer pipe was excavated below the level of the floor – with a riser connection which would have presumably been connected to the main sewage piping of the building. The pipe ran in a southeasterly direction from the corner of the building and disappeared outside the excavated area.

Soil samples were taken from within the pipe, which are currently awaiting analysis for evidence of insect or parasite remains. There are anecdotal stories that parasitic disease was rampant through the compounds and the Rehabilitation Centre, and it is hoped this can be proved through the analysis of these samples.

Trench 3 was originally located in the main central area. However, the vegetation on site was too thick to allow easy excavation of it: Thorney Hill is aptly named for the large amount of thick gorse bushes covering the area.

Therefore, the location was moved 7m directly to the east, located in part by a participant named Chris who was born on the site and remembered his sister's hut being somewhere in the vicinity of the trench. However, excavation of this trench in its new location revealed no archaeological remains and suspected natural soils were encountered approximately 75cm below the surface.

A deeper sondage was excavated over one half of the trench, which confirmed the presence of these natural deposits.

Trench 4 was located over the main road of the compound and was originally placed to hopefully reveal evidence of the original (pre-prefab) compound. The hardcore base for the road surface was encountered bisecting the trench – with natural deposits outside the road area. No other significant finds were recovered from this trench.

Alongside the excavation, field walking was undertaken throughout the area, which yielded many finds. Day-to-day (but no less poignant) objects dating to the 1960s such as cooking pots, milk bottles, fireplace guards, handmade leather shoes, children's toys, number plates, large amounts of ceramic sherds, and even side C/D of the vinyl double album *Wheels of Fire* by Cream were located.

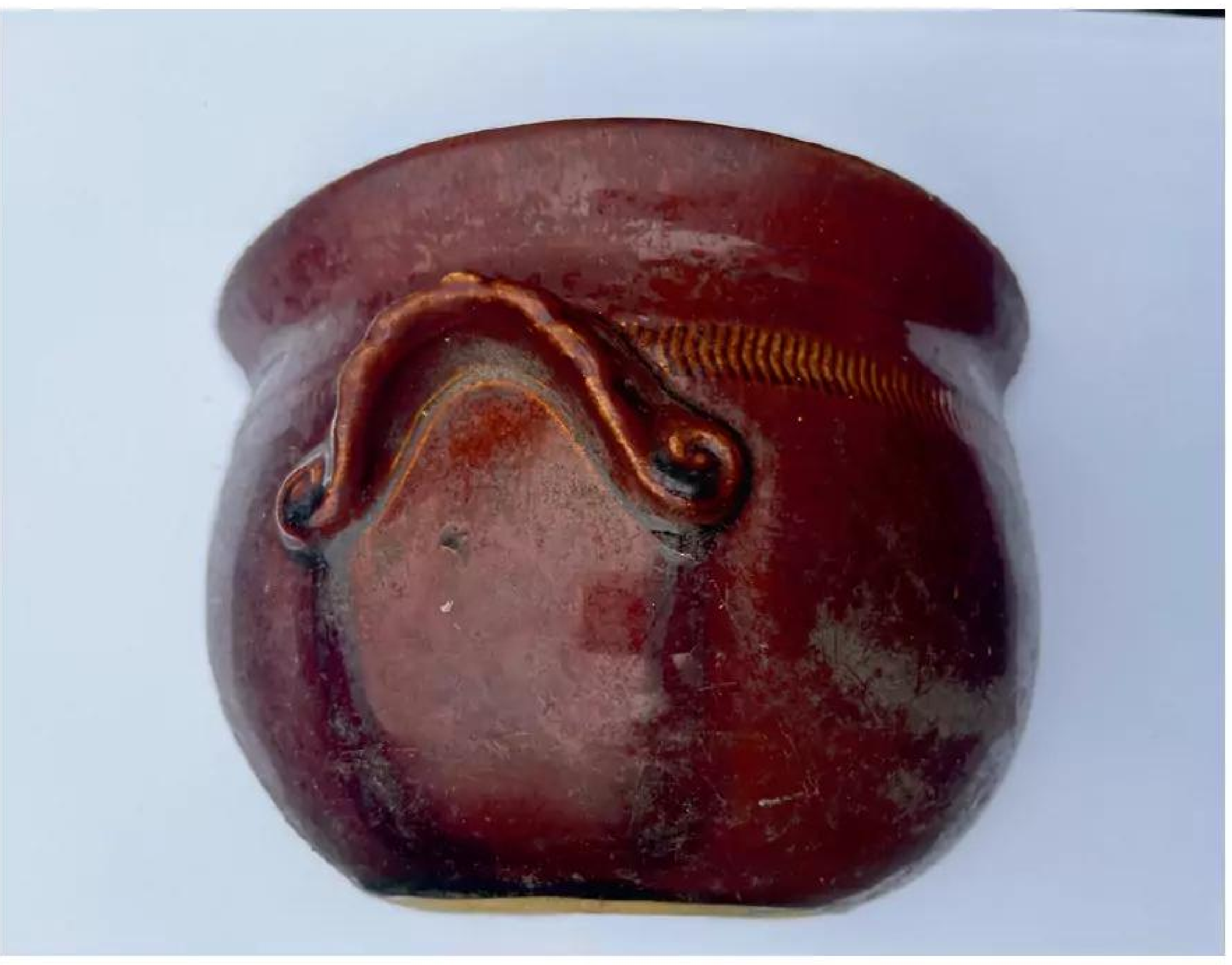
Objects more directly related to Romany Gypsy culture were also recovered. These included metal clippers for trimming the hooves of horses, a bottle of Sloan's liniment used to heal wounds on horses, and the stone wheel from a traditional knife sharpening cart.

Most notably, an original sherd of Imari-ware porcelain produced in Japan in the early 1900s was spotted half-embedded in the forest floor. This artefact is particularly important: It pre-dates a collection created by Royal Crown Derby, a contemporary line inspired by Old Imari patterned porcelain specifically made to target the Romany Gypsy market, which is coveted and collected by Romany Gypsy families to this day.

The discovery of this ceramic type, at a historic Romani site, is of great significance. The discovery of an original Japanese manufactured sherd, made long before the inception of the Royal Crown Derby line, shows a tangible link between the past and the present for an ethnic group that relies heavily on the passing down of stories to preserve our history.

Right: Archaeologist John-Henry Phillips sorts through finds, holding a tool used to trim horse's hooves

ESZTER HALASI



Above: A ceramic chamber pot that was excavated from the site

ROMANI COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY

These traditional Romani artefacts stand as a powerful symbol that, despite the attempts of governing authorities to eradicate Romani culture from the New Forest, which subsequently led to the imposed conditions of the compounds and the Rehabilitation Centre, among the backdrop of wider attempts spanning centuries, that still persist to rid and dehumanise the UK of Romany Gypsies, Romany people still hold tightly onto their culture.

The excavation was undertaken not just to highlight the story of the New Forest Romany Gypsies, or to uncover the past of an ethnic group so often spoken over or not spoken of at all.

It was undertaken to show the prejudice and persecution faced by Romany people in the past and, most importantly, to contextualise how they are targeted today.

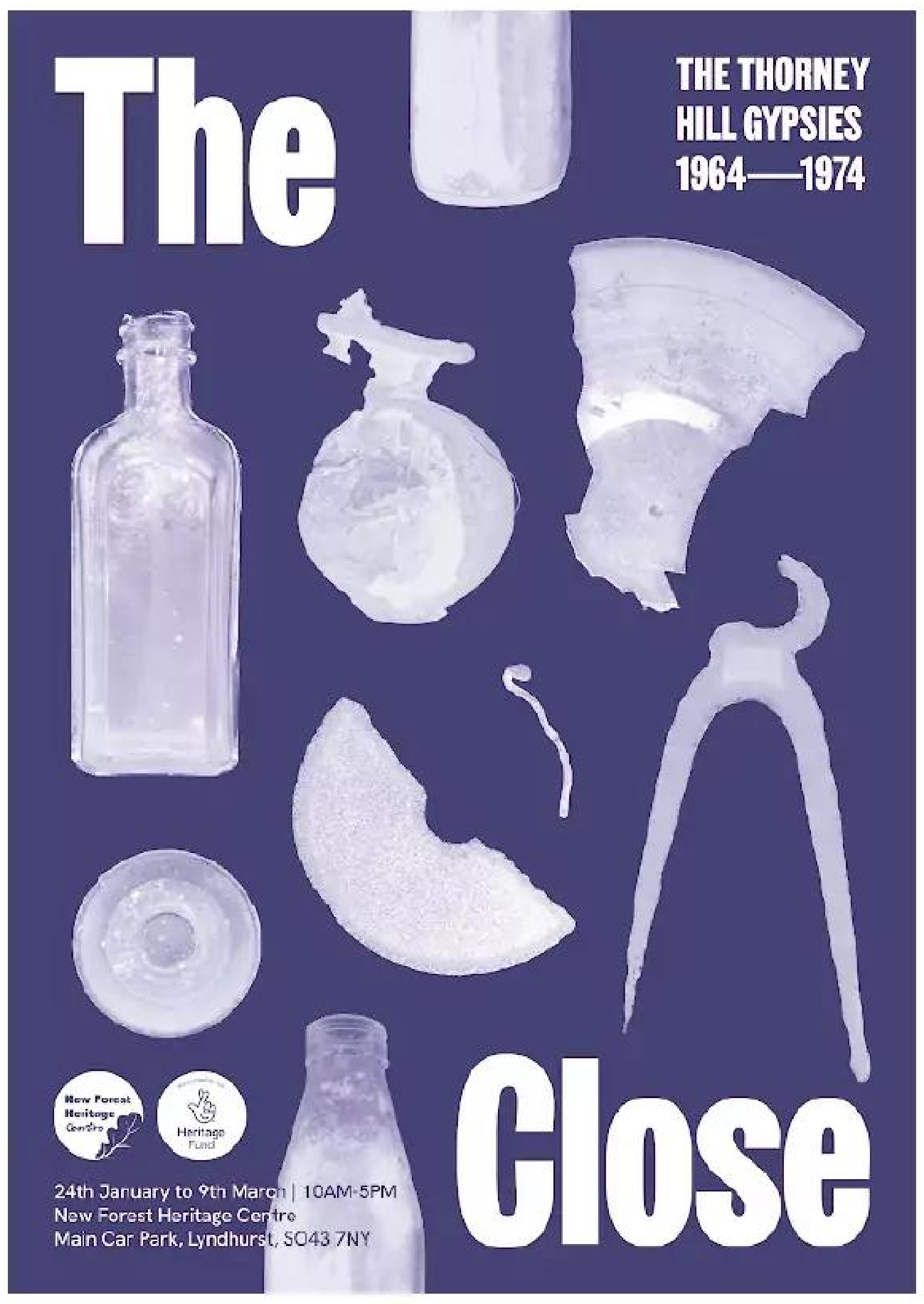
The compound system was not the only overt attempt by authorities to forcibly assimilate Romany people. A similar scheme, known as the 'Tinker Experiment', took place in Scotland around the same time, but less tangible attempts at cultural genocide have taken place consistently for the last 500 years, right up to the *Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act* in 2022, which directly targeted Romany Gypsy culture, and which many view as the final nail in the coffin for ethnic nomadic existence.

By excavating historic Romani sites alongside contemporary Romani communities, we can begin to have difficult conversations that can, with any luck, impact the present, and perhaps even improve the future. ■

An exhibition about the excavation from 24 January – 9 March, from 10am-5pm:

The Close: The Thorney Hill Gypsies 1964-1974 takes place at the New Forest Heritage Centre, Main Carpark, Lyndhurst, SO43 7NY

Or catch the excavation on Digging for Britain Series *12, Episode 6 on BBC iPlayer: https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0026rl9/digging-for-britain-series-12-6-lost-mansions-and-impaled-prisoners*


The
THE THORNEY HILL GYPSIES 1964—1974
Close
New Forest Heritage Centre
Heritage Fund
24th January to 9th March | 10AM-5PM
New Forest Heritage Centre
Main Car Park, Lyndhurst, SO43 7NY

Archaeology: What is it good for?

CBA [2]

Above left: Wellbeing and Heritage Conference taking plac at Delapre Abbey

Above right: CBA Youth Advisory Board in a meeting

Whether you're an avid follower, participator, or professional, the practice of archaeology and its discoveries inspire and awe. Dr Sadie Watson, senior research fellow, MOLA, an active researcher on the benefits and social value of archaeology, explores what archaeology means to us

Can the impact of our discoveries have wide-ranging benefits to local and global communities and how do we all play a proactive role in its (re)imagined future?

What do we mean when we talk about archaeology?

Archaeology is one of the most multi-faceted disciplines it is possible to engage with, providing a veritable smorgasbord of options for enjoyment, study, and employment.

It forms a unique link between the humanities, arts, and the physical, chemical, and biological sciences, encouraging us to think and behave creatively; while often also benefiting from healthy exercise and experiencing valuable human contact.

This complexity is its strength and those of us who are fortunate enough to have been involved at some point know this, but the wider public may have a narrower definition, thinking that archaeology is just about things: artefacts in museum cases, standing ruins in the landscape, or their excavated remains.

In fact, archaeology is not just a noun, it is also a verb: we do archaeology, we are archaeologists, and that applies to whether you are an occasional volunteer or a permanent member of staff for a major organisation.

This sets our subject apart from other highly qualified professions who set legal barriers to entry such as medicine or law, but importantly also aligns us with a myriad of special interest groups such as gardening, ornithology, or environmental campaigners.

There is space within archaeology for a multitude of participation, and we all need to be spreading the use of the verb to incorporate the idea of archaeology as a process, from which great benefits can be had.

A standard definition of archaeology is the study of past peoples through their surviving material remains, which taken at face value does confirm that it is fundamentally about people. But it has resisted being defined as a social science, and keeping the scope wide is important.

There is a significant knowledge revolution under way in the hard sciences right now, with advances in DNA, isotopes, and palaeopathology (the study of diseases) all providing incredible new information about migration, cultural links, and public health, all driven by archaeology.

Archaeological discoveries are contributing to new theories around the history of mathematics and astronomy, from Wiltshire, where a cross-disciplinary team is studying the links between prehistoric monumental alignments and past societies' knowledge of lunar astronomy.

Similarly, research in Iraq, where ancient cuneiform tablets are evidence of the earliest known writing system, illustrates how our system of numbers and mathematics developed with complex equations, although previously credited to the Greeks these represented calculations predate Pythagoras by almost a thousand years.

Furthermore, historians are provided confirmations of their sources by archaeological discoveries, or occasionally the opposite (see Box 4) and although skills may overlap, they are increasingly used in parallel.

The cross-disciplinary nature of our field means that there are many ways in which we can weave all these threads together, depending on who is doing the archaeology, in what context, and what other skills and experience they bring to the process.

As the New Zealand poet Selina Tusitala Marsh has said, "when the arts and humanities work alongside science, knowledge grows deeper," as the arts "don't just entertain, they explain, not just complementing science, but completing it."

The unique offer of archaeology is the ways it presents to us of knowing, understanding, and communicating.

CBA [2]

Top: Cornwall Archaeological Society on a dig

Now we've defined archaeology, what exactly is it good for?

Put simply, archaeology is good for people, planet, and profit, none of these in isolation from the others, and often very closely aligned. Some of these benefits are more easily measured than others, and there is much data at our disposal to explain those (Box 1).

The tangible, financially valuable impacts reported on include the huge volume of tourists who flock to all corners of the UK, many of whom have their holiday plans fuelled by archaeology.

There are many of us who rely on archaeology for our living, and, despite it not being a particularly highly paid profession, a significant number of people are in employment – the last 'Profiling the Profession' survey was collated in 2020, and reported that around 7,000 individuals worked within UK archaeology.

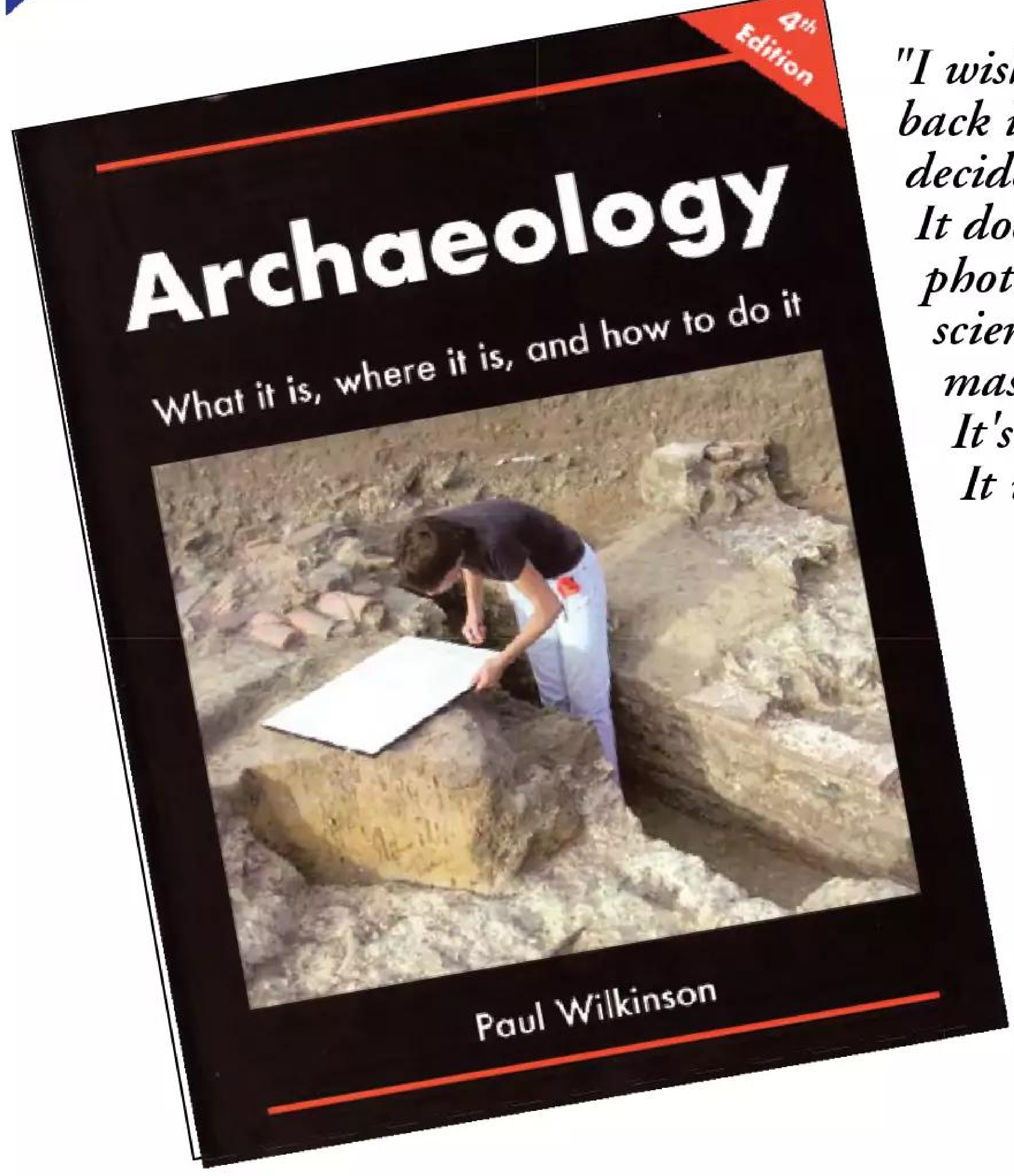
During that year, and in comparison to other UK economic industries, archaeology was larger than marine fishing and pet food manufacture!

But it's not just the archaeological roles that we should be counting; we should also be thinking about all the jobs that are inspired by, or supported through, archaeology: the game designers and researchers, the creatives and artists, the authors and musicians, the television executives, presenters, and production teams.

There are labs and research centres busy with scientists working on archaeological material, and archives replete with materials available for study. These archives are becoming more relevant as time passes and the development of pioneering techniques opens up new methods of analysis, as has been seen with the continual bioarchaeological study of Black Death plague victims in the London archive; each repeated study conducted by international research teams results in added information about the spread and virulence of major diseases.

Archaeology as an activity offers much in the way of value to people, both on an individual and a communal level. These impacts are less simple to measure than assessing economic benefit or counting numbers of jobs

Right: Families trying Archaeology at the Festival of Archaeology, Hardwick Hall



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Box 1. It's not (just) the economy, stupid

This saying (or a shorter version of it anyway) has been used in many contexts since it was first seen during Bill Clinton's 1992 election campaign. Do we tie ourselves in knots when we make the economic argument, as a case of engaging with people who know the price of everything, but the value of nothing?

Of course, politicians need to focus on the economy and archaeologists have used the huge contribution we make to the economy to bolster support among policy makers and those who hold the purse strings.

But is it worth thinking more widely about how else the whole archaeology sector contributes, and how broad that contribution is, when we are making our case, and talking about the value of what we do.

So, should we be talking their language more forcefully? There are powerful numbers at our disposal, collected by sector bodies to show the longevity and sustainability of central investment: Historic Environment Scotland reported in 2023 that grants attracted a further £3.92 of additional funding for every £1 invested, and Historic England's annual Heritage Counts Report showed there were 500,000 people employed through the heritage sector, both directly and indirectly, showing the breadth of jobs and businesses supported.

Above: A walking tour conducted with local community participants during the development of the 'Underserved Audiences Strategy' for the Lower Thames Crossing project

MOLA

The statistics reported above can be used to convince those with spending power to direct finances towards heritage and archaeology, with a renewed urgency brought by the new UK Labour government's stated 'Missions'.

These plans have specific relevance to our sector, through a commitment to a rigorous but efficient planning system, renewed investment in university research as part of the Kickstarting Economic Growth Mission, and increased use of therapeutic archaeology and wellbeing-led projects as part of the NHS Fit for the Future Mission, to choose just two. This requires much advocacy on the part of archaeologists with specialist knowledge and will need additional expertise in health economics for example, to bolster our arguments.

and are highly dependent on the participant.

We can see from the many projects reported in *British Archaeology* over the years that despite the majority of archaeological fieldwork in the UK conducted in advance of development, there are a myriad of good reasons why we should be pushing it as a chance to provide meaningful human contact, and consequently as a source of positive wellbeing.

Speaking personally, from my own experiences working closely and alongside colleagues on busy urban excavations has provided me with thousands of highly entertaining, intellectually stimulating, and occasionally deeply emotional interactions. These benefits are not restricted to those who engage in digging, as we know that there are valuable encounters to be had through handling artefacts and experiencing other less tangible aspects of archaeology such as music, food, or games, through touch, sound, or our own creative responses and the human interactions these encourage.

There is much research as to why archaeology can be good for establishing human networks and even for mental and physical health (Box 5) but working alongside each other on a shared goal requiring some degree of physical graft and certain intellectual enquiry in equal measure is a rare thing.

At the very beginning of my career, an inspirational supervisor told me that it was unlikely that I would be wrong in my archaeological interpretations, and that using my imagination would get me closer towards the right answer.

How inspirational for an early career entrant to hear that and to feel able therefore, to contribute my thoughts – not that I always did. The rare chance to work on a project that combines a team drawn from the various corners of our discipline: community, research, and professional (by which I mean employed) really brings this home; and should happen more often – teams are stronger for a diverse and imaginative group of thinkers, as are the archaeological results.

This chance to put ourselves into new (or old!) shoes is what makes archaeology special. Academics have variously called this 'the archaeological imagination', or the potential of archaeology to provide 'enchantment', both of which get to the heart of the matter; that we are offered the chance, and actively encouraged if we're lucky, to put ourselves into different lives, places, and ways of living that few other disciplines interrogate so often, and with such open minds.

As an occupation that has evolved in some areas to be predominantly about helping construction clients or

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To be washed
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59B
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BLACKGROUNDS
59B
AB+ MISC
BLACKGROUNDS
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POT & MISC

Right: A small proportion of the huge volume of environmental material recovered from excavations in advanced of HS2, these are in the system to be processed (washed, dried, bagged, and catalogued) before analysis and archiving

MOLA

MOLA

Above: The London Mithraeum Bloomberg Space displays over 600 objects from the excavations conducted between 2011-13. The display case (shown here during final set-up by MOLA leads Louise Fowler and Luisa Duarte) was designed by a team who were keen to highlight the beauty and visual splendour of the artefacts

protecting remains from damage, we may have some way to go before this is fully accepted as a key outcome from archaeology that should be encouraged.

But on a basic human level the interesting, creative, and fun aspects of imaginative archaeology are fundamental to its widespread appeal and are usually the reasons why we stay in, or close to, the sector for so long.

Should we be worried for the future of archaeology?

If you read the archaeological press or check out social media, you could be forgiven for thinking the whole occupation of archaeology is facing an existential threat. The changes to planning regulation proposed by the government in England, the fall in University student numbers, and a drop-off in volunteer opportunities are all significant issues that sound concerning in terms of looking after, studying, and working on, our archaeology.

Likewise, and potentially even more worrying, are climate crisis-related threats to heritage sites and lack of government support for publicly funded organisations such as museums and archives. This could result in a dramatic loss of archaeology, in terms of both physical loss and lack of funding for staffing and public access.

Many archaeologists are also worried about the inescapable rise of what is commonly referred to as 'pseudoscience,' with a rejection of expertise and exponential growth in conspiracy theories fanned by social media platforms presenting accepted fact as dishonourable, and scientists, such as archaeologists as hiding a truth from the public.

While we can be rest assured that the last of these concerns is based on untruths and manipulated by some, the losses related to climate change, the drop in opportunities to participate and the challenge faced by our university sector are indeed real, the others may not be quite not so much, sot exactly how worried should we be? And what can we do to support this wonderful subject, that offers so much for a huge variety of reasons?

What is the current situation?

None of the issues described as concerns above are new to us. In fact, some have been exercising minds for decades. And yet there is still reason for cautious optimism in some areas.

For example, we still have very

Box 2. The need for more university-led research

The umbrella body for all institutions who offer archaeology degrees (UAUK) successfully lobbied government to maintain archaeology's subject funding, arguing that it should be considered vital for supporting key industries and public services due to the high volume of contracting projects always on the go.

There is no specific requirement to have a degree to enter the profession these days but most still do, and there is an excellent rate of finding work amongst them. In fact, along with those who study history (we are in the same category for the data), archaeology graduates are more likely to find employment than those who study economics, English, or politics.

What we desperately need is more funded university research of similar levels that we have seen in recent years, not only in archaeological science but also to shape informed arguments against pseudoarchaeology and those seeking to subvert archaeological narratives and research to suit their own agendas.

The direct impact on volunteers and professionals has been profound, vocal commentators can be unpleasant: right-wing, racist, and harping back to an glorified past that evidence-based archaeology has consistently shown didn't ever really exist.

These spurious and damaging theories need to be confronted with data-driven and rigorous challenges, grounded in a depth and breadth of knowledge and context that only university-based researchers are likely to have, by virtue of their focus on research.

Through a vast data mining exercise, Chiara Bonacchi, Jessica Whitte, and Mark Altaweel at the University of Edinburgh have shown how polarised and hostile social media content about some archaeological periods such as the Iron Age is, reminding us to be vigilant.

But their huge dataset also tells us that there are far more people who are interacting about the past in healthy ways online, which is less well considered in the modern world, where the loudest voices tend to be the ones we listen to.

This moderate and interested online community are the future archaeologists: students, researchers, project participants and volunteers, YAC members and their families.

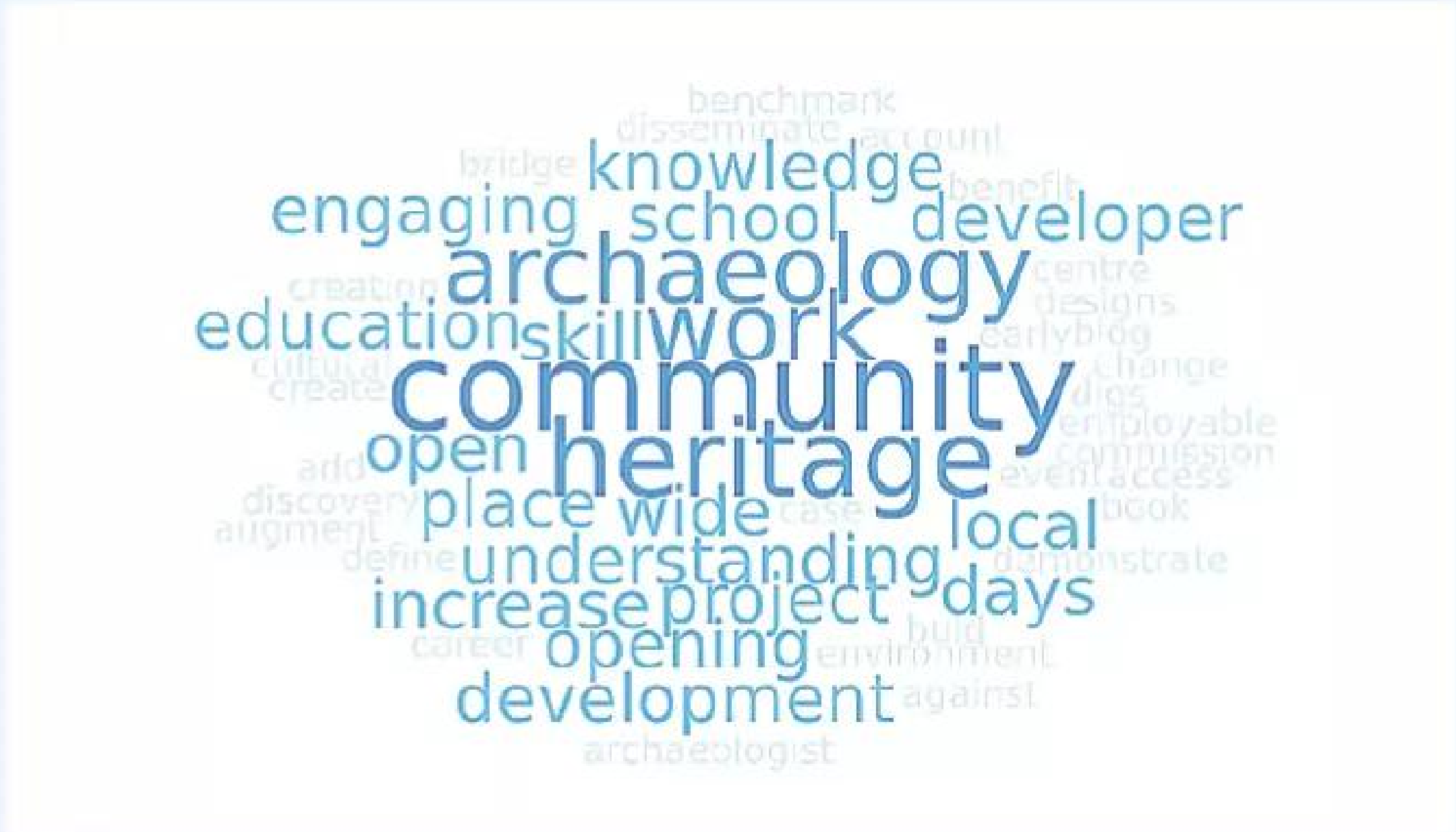
Box 3. The view from developers

MOLA [2]

As part of a UKRI Fellowship research project looking at maximising public benefit from developer-funded archaeology a survey was carried out with developers operating in the UK. We spoke with a variety of organisations including construction firms, large infrastructure schemes, developers, and consultancies, all of whom had commissioned archaeological work due to the UK planning system.

This requires the developer to fund any work that needs to happen in advance of, during, and after (in the case of sharing of results, public engagement, and publication), their scheme being constructed.

It prompted us to ask them what they saw as the main benefits of archaeology, and what it could provide, both for them as clients and for the communities that live near their projects – interestingly they had quite a lengthy list.



Above: Word cloud presenting the results of a survey asking developers that they saw as the main benefits that archaeology could provide (the largest words were most commonly provided)

Above: Archaeologists working in advance of development in accordance with the UK planning system, on the Tideway site at Chambers Wharf, London

The word cloud shows what they produced (without any prompting), and it's clear that they saw the primary value of archaeology as to what it can contribute to both people and places they inhabit: archaeology's very raison d'etre. When they were asked about possible barriers to creating more value through archaeology on developments, they mentioned issues such as accessibility, timescales, and health and safety concerns.

However, they also helpfully suggested ways to deal with all these potential problems, most of which were easily solved by proper risk assessment, planning, and ensuring accessibility, as well as managing the public's expectations and educating them on the role of archaeology within the planning process. All of which archaeologists are very used to doing, so this should really be no barrier at all with early conversations and a keen project team.

SHARAN ANSONG

Above: New residents and neighbours at Beam Park, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, creating replica Bronze Age pots at a Community Day. Their new homes are built over an ancient landscape of palaeochannels so together with residents we chose the Bronze Age to focus on, rather than the somewhat more modern Ford Factory

robust legal frameworks in all four devolved nations of the UK and updates to the *National Planning Policy Framework* leave the protections for archaeology largely unchanged, despite concerns there would be major reductions in how buried remains and historic buildings were considered during development.

This in turn gives us further chances to develop how these protection regimes operate, by drawing in a wider interpretation of public benefit as one example, to encourage contracting organisations and their clients to fund more innovative projects, such as those reported on in (Box5).

There is no legal reason why we can't innovate and expand upon our standard outputs from contracting, commercial archaeological projects, we have all the relevant guidance we might possibly need written by experts, all we have left to do is make a proper start.

News from the media over a drop in university admissions is cause for concern, however. Running parallel to this is the constant threat of reductions of provision in some courses, and redundancies among our academic colleagues.

Arts, humanities, and social science departments have tended to be the worst hit, although as we saw from the closure of the world-famous department at Sheffield, those with leading research and teaching in the more science-based areas of archaeology are not immune.

The high level at which many UK Universities operate is reported (Box 2) but there is evidence from our sister subject history that the pre-university study of history is strong, which supports undergraduate enrolments, so the need to lobby for a return of an archaeology A level and the introduction of a GCSE is the natural step to encourage and inspire new generations to enter our discipline.

We do know, thanks to a CBA-run survey of their Young Archaeologists Club (YAC) members, that they are the only section within the whole of UK archaeology that accurately reflects the make-up of the wider UK population, and wonderfully, despite COVID, YAC membership is up by 12%, volunteer numbers are up by 9%, and there are more clubs than ever before, with more in the pipeline.

, though, once young people hit 16 years of age and are too old for YAC, there is little alternative for them. Another reason to robustly support the re-introduction of the A level.

Archaeology can expand your mind

In case I haven't made this clear enough already, archaeology can be good for you, and in fact, taking an archaeological approach to thinking about the world will expand your mind.

In a recent *This is Archaeology* lecture, the University of Leicester's Associate Professor Dr Rachel Crellin talked vividly about how archaeology challenges

Box 4. Archaeology and history combine as a superpower

Archaeology's powerful tools are often observed at their strongest when they are called upon to aid historical records and matters of public and political interest.

No more so perhaps than in the recovery of war graves, conflict, reconciliation, and restitution. Recent notable examples are the recovery of First World War graves in Northern Europe, more recent disturbing cases in Rwanda, the Balkan states, and Iraq, with more projects anticipated in Syria and Gaza as access is allowed.

These projects don't tend to be as a result of developer-funded work for obvious reasons and are generally planned well in advance, but a series of discoveries as part of reinforcement groundworks on Gediminas' Hill, in Lithuania's capital Vilnius, resulted in an extraordinary outcome. A group of 21 burials were found, which after archaeological analysis were confirmed to have been participants in the uprising against the then-Russian Empire in 1863-4. They had been executed and buried in unmarked graves on the hill, with public access blocked by the authorities preventing commemoration.

Their discovery reinvigorated interest in Lithuania's troubled nineteenth-century history, and their reburial in 2019 with full military honours was attended by political and military leaders from Poland and Belarus, described by the Lithuanian government as a pivotal moment in the relationship between the three nations.

The crucial contribution of archaeology to this previously historically studied story deepened its impact, stirred new interests in archaeological science, and fuelled new national debates about Lithuania and the complex historical relationships with its neighbours.

Above: The tower on the top of Gediminas' Hill, Vilnius, Lithuania, with the area subject to reinforcement groundworks visible on the slopes

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how you think and encourages you to consider things differently. The things we study in the past, even the recent past, are of contrasting times, and were vastly different in many ways: socially, economically, and structurally.

Often, we are forced to take different viewpoints in our attempts to understand them, or even to approach understanding them – Rachel studies the Neolithic and Bronze Age, which is quite different indeed.

Below: Storytelling at the Festival of Archaeology

Bottom: Behind the scenes at Crofton Oak in Northampton, where archaeological material recovered by MOLA's field teams is processed before analysis and eventual archiving

CBA

MOLA

But without archaeologists taking these angles on past lives and thinking about how they compare to our own, we would miss this creative thinking as well as the chance to imagine a world where things didn't have to be how they are right now: challenging, upsetting, and seemingly intractable.

So, is archaeology actually about the future?

If you accept my premise that archaeology is a verb as well as a noun, then deciding what archaeologists actually do is perhaps made a bit simpler, despite the wide variety of roles that are involved. My own view is that being an archaeologist (in whatever form) requires an understanding that fundamentally archaeology is about change, and how we as people deal with that.

In the planning and development occupation, including my colleagues in contracting archaeology, this means we are constantly engaged in removing archaeology from its context (excavation), the most fundamental change in its form it is possible to imagine.

The artefacts are displayed and interpreted by museum archaeologists and curators, often in ways that are quite removed from where they were found. How we interpret what we remove and how we relate these objects back to their findspot (if indeed we do at all) is critical to how relevant they are to modern visitors.

Likewise, any archaeological remains that are protected through the planning system whether reburied, left unexcavated or displayed in situ, are part of a complex process of irretrievable physical change.

The most extreme version of this is loss due to climate change, which is having devastating heritage impacts on UK wide sites, such as the flood damage over Christmas 2024 on the historic Bridgewater canal structures in Cheshire, and its collections, as well as the nationwide issue of the drying out and desiccation of peaty, waterlogged soils seen at many sites like Vindolanda on Hadrian's Wall.

The subsequent risk is the loss of our collective knowledge, that precious organic objects such as Vindolanda's famous writing tablets may not have survived without the damp soil to preserve them.

'Managing change' in these urgent situations will need innovative approaches to threatened sites, perhaps rapid recovery before destruction or loss, and some tricky decisions over what to save, and what to abandon to the inevitable.

We have talked ourselves into a bit of a corner over this, with our history of an ongoing narrative stressing the need to preserve and conserve that which is threatened, it is the basis for our planning-led system of archaeological mitigation after all.

We will also need to change our own processes and systems in due course to tackle this challenge.

CBA [3]

Top right: Jess Krause researching

Top: A roundhouse as seen using digital VR

Above: Young archaeologists taking part in an excavation

Archaeology students are well placed to help with this, as central to all archaeology courses is a principal thread of teaching critical thinking skills. Knowing how to carefully examine what you see, how to translate complex datasets into publicly accessible and entertaining materials, and knowing when to let go and accept change will be core critical skills for archaeologists in the years ahead.

As George Knight, the author of the very last CBA's *Letters to a Young Archaeologist* said: "The world is changing, and archaeology with it", which is perhaps worrying, certainly fascinating, but definitely exciting.

What can I do to spread the word about the value of Archaeology?

The last question of the article is the one that most depends on you: your current situation, your background, your spare time (or lack of), and most of all, your own interests.

It's a bit like the guidance you get on airplanes for putting your own masks on before helping others; you need to make sure you are benefiting from archaeology yourself before you can meaningfully encourage others to do so.

Moreover, for people who work in the sector, acknowledging that concept (and although we might love our jobs, they do not always love us back) can sometimes be actively difficult, finding ways to restore the love, and feel the benefit.

Whatever your current situation there will be ways to enjoy archaeology from home and as a leisure pursuit, by indulging your interests and curiosity, by visiting sites and museums, or accessing heritage online.

Understanding can be expanded in multiple ways now: reading, watching, listening, sharing, and chatting with others informally are all valid. If you stop enjoying something through one of these methods, then you can give yourself permission to stop and try another way.

Those who manage change within the planning system, and those who design and work on construction projects need to expand the outcomes and benefits from developer-funded work to include wellbeing-focused impacts.

The move to a more holistic framework will require us to collaborate closely with health professionals, which in turn would require a new way of thinking about how the funding for these projects could be shared, including their various results, beyond the current standards of presentation for archaeological findings, and subsequently reported to a wider audience.

Advocacy can be a powerful way to feel involved and influential. Many voices are louder than one, and we can all share the value of archaeology through engaging with (and joining if possible) organisations that represent our views.

Obviously, the CBA is the primary voice for stressing community involvement, education, and the promotion of archaeology within the UK's legislative framework but there will be local societies in your area, or groups that have a specific focus.

Lastly, if you have experienced one or more of the benefits, we have discussed in this article, don't forget to tell people as the best advocacy always starts from a personal perspective, and a local context. ■

Box 5. Archaeology as therapy

There is an ever-increasing amount of research, often conducted in conjunction with health professionals, to show the value people gain from engaging with archaeology. The AMPHORA project (Authentic and Meaningful Participation in Heritage or Related Activities) produced toolkits in tandem with people with lived experience of mental health issues, and mental health and heritage professionals, to ensure people invited onto projects are cared for responsibly, as well as the archaeology they are working on.

The team stress that central to these projects are the opportunities for empowerment, for creating a new focus, and encouraging new connection between team members, within a safe and inclusive environment.

None of these benefits may necessarily be new to many of us who have felt them ourselves, but to expand the opportunity to others and to include archaeology as a health-adjacent experience is steadily changing how many view it, drawing people towards archaeology as a method of therapy.

Many of the specific benefits people gain do not appear to be just from being outdoors, working with others, or even having fun, but actually come from the archaeology itself – and as Claire Nolan's research has shown, a sense of peace and comfort can be felt when visiting standing stones or other prehistoric monuments in the landscape, which doesn't require excavation and could be widely provided if we were to take this therapeutic potential more seriously.

Lastly, and on a more physical level, there is evidence to show that the microbes in soil can stimulate the production of the hormone serotonin, which we need to regulate our moods and soothe stress. 'Soil' as defined here naturally includes uncontaminated archaeological deposits, as the microbes break down organic matter, creating the ground conditions and features archaeologists are so familiar with.

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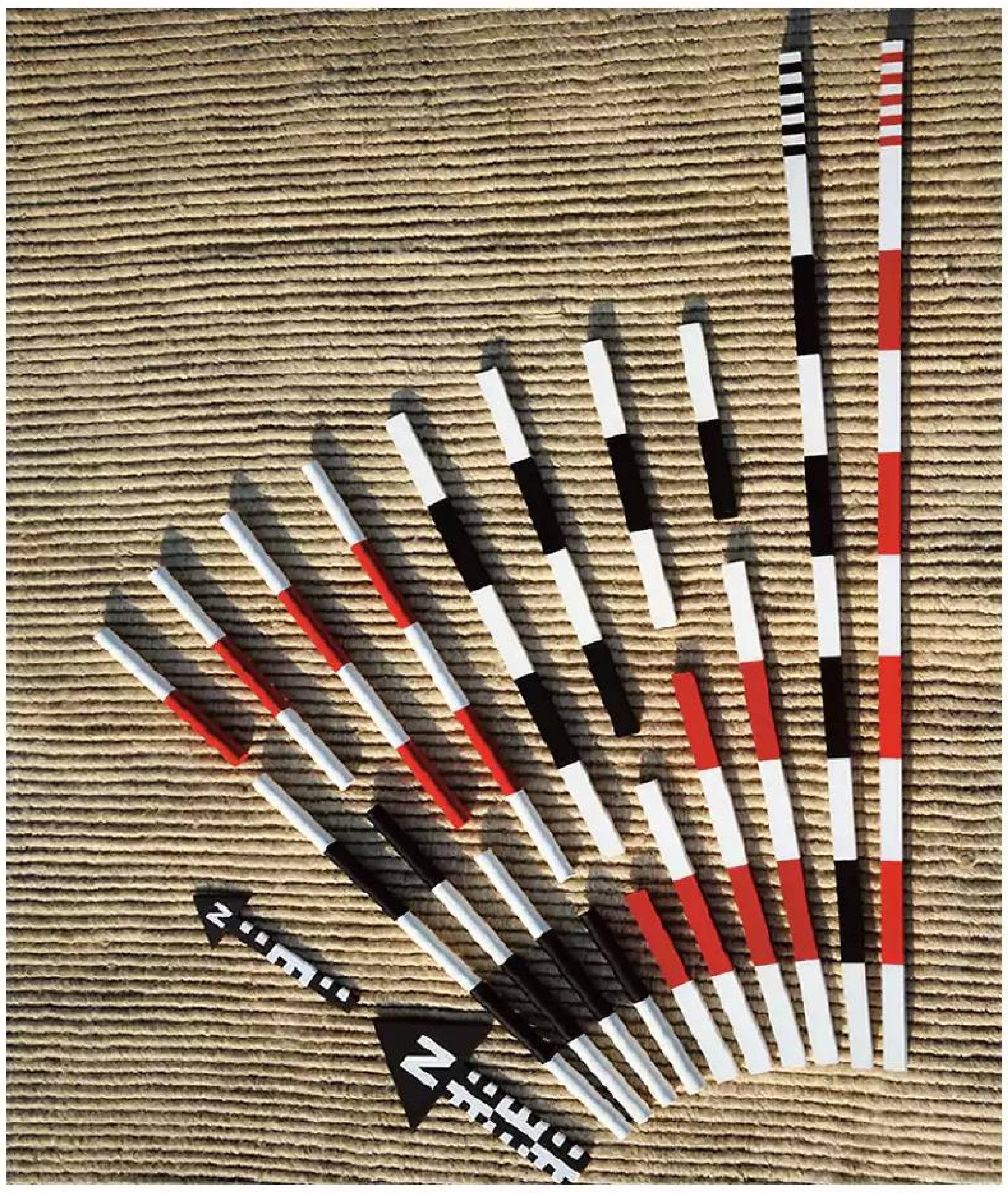

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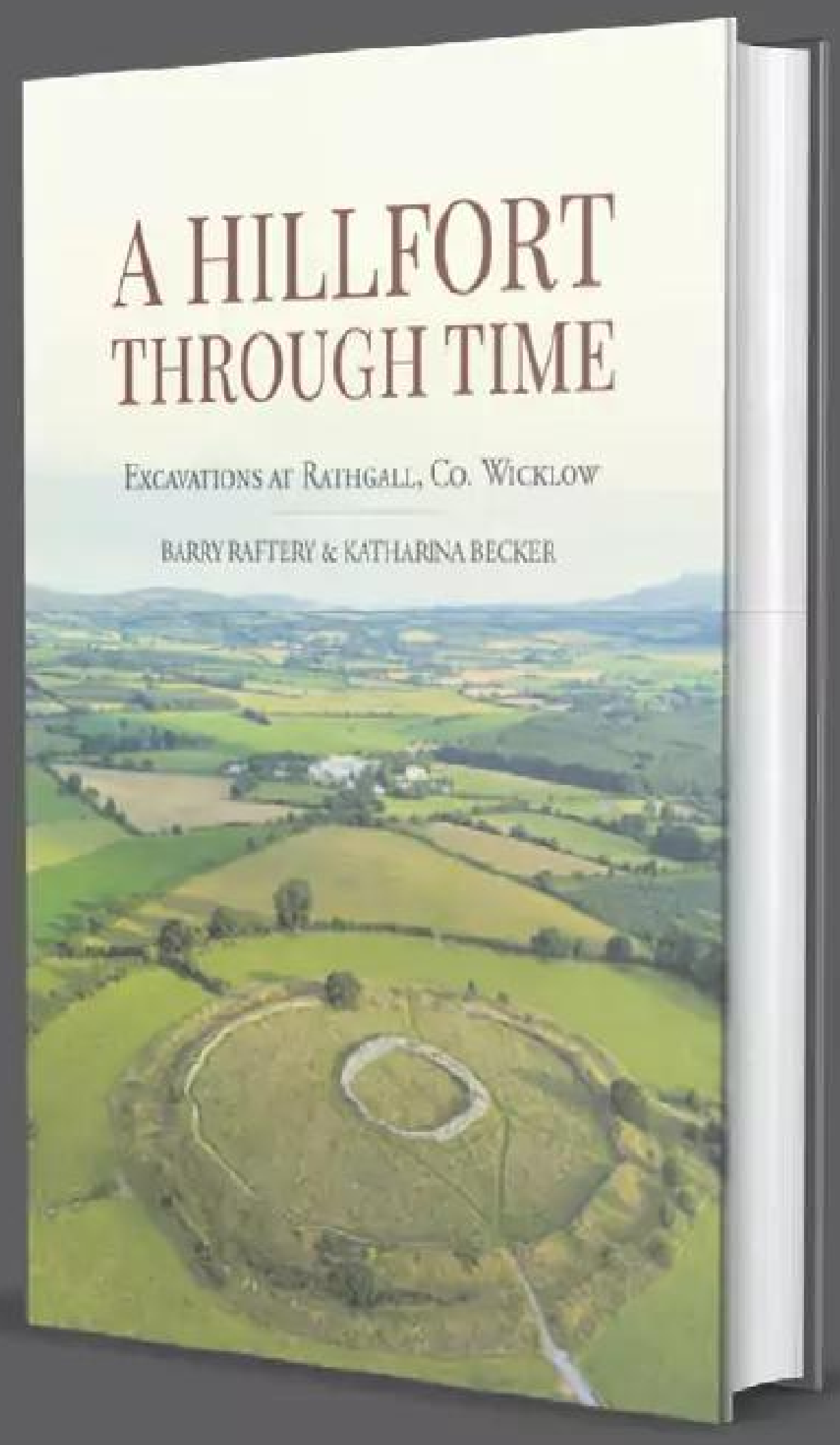
A HILLFORT THROUGH TIME
Excavations at Rathgall, Co. Wicklow
Barry Raftery & Katharina Becker

A HILLFORT
THROUGH TIME

RATHGALL HILLFORT is perhaps one of the most important, iconic and well-known monuments in Irish archaeology. This publication presents the excavations at Rathgall, Co. Wicklow, conducted by Barry Raftery, formerly Professor of Celtic Archaeology at University College Dublin. Although Raftery published aspects of the site primarily in the 1970s, he passed away before he could finalise a comprehensive account. This volume presents his work alongside new data from post-excavation analysis conducted between 2010 and 2013. Raftery's original voice is preserved, with editorial comments adding clarification where necessary. His draft text is juxtaposed with discussions of alternative scenarios that emerged from recent analyses, including finalised site drawings and photographs.

'The present volume assuredly joins Barry's other great contributions to Ireland's archaeology, from his studies of La Tène material culture in the 1980s by way of his leadership of wetland investigations to Pagan Celtic Ireland—in sum, a remarkable legacy of which his family can be justifiably proud. Dr Katharina Becker and the contributors who have brought these important studies on the hillfort at Rathgall to fruition are to be applauded.'

Ian Ralston, Abercromby Professor Emeritus of Archaeology,
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Professor Timothy Darvill

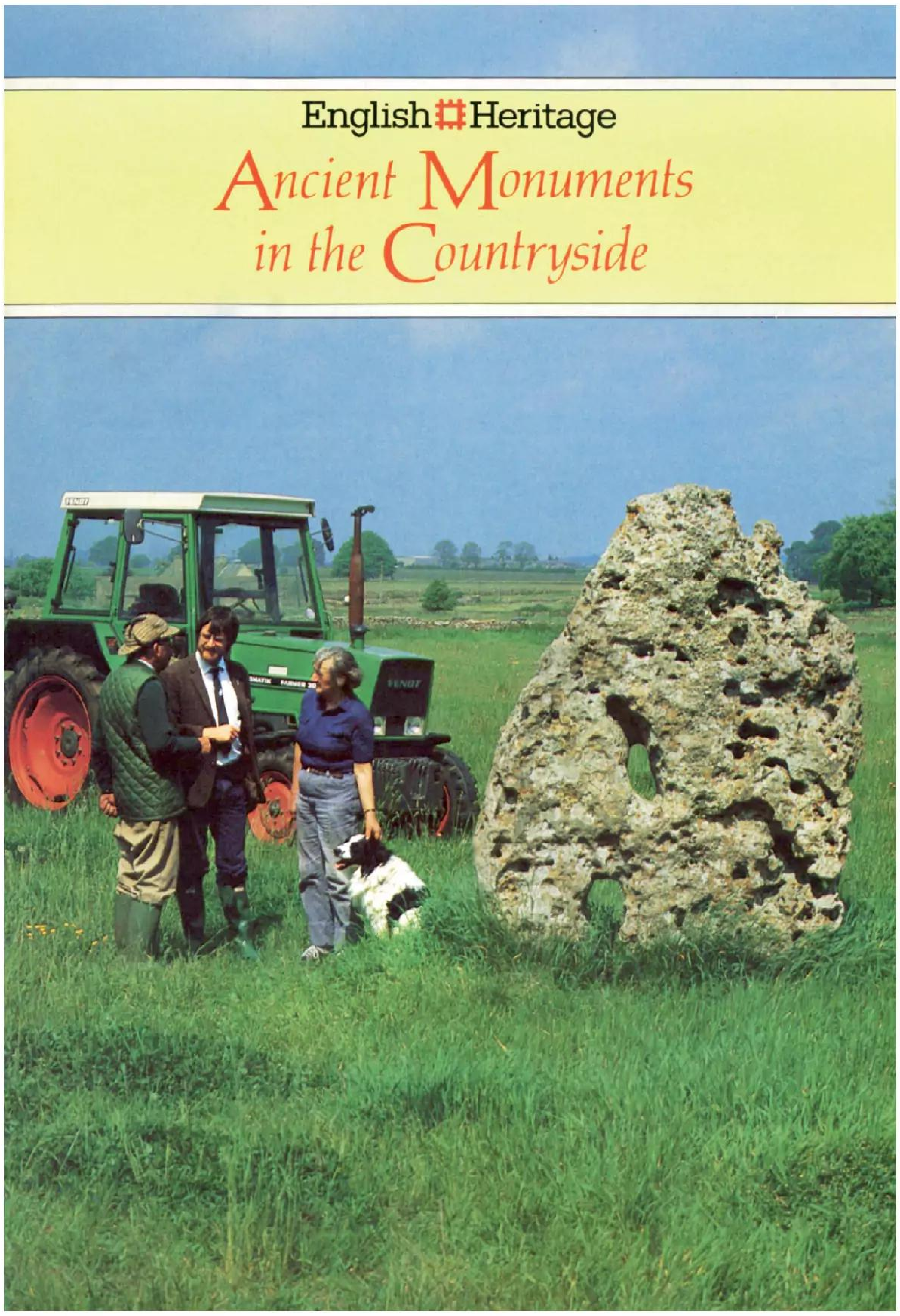
I was shocked and saddened by the untimely death of Professor Darvill who made such a tremendous contribution to archaeology in Britain.

I first met Tim in October 1980, working for the late Alan Saville on the Hazleton North long barrow excavations. We were both very interested in chambered tombs, megalithic monuments, and prehistory, so there was plenty to talk about. Tim used to roar on to site in his elderly but indomitable Land Rover.

I took photographs for some of Tim's projects and publications, including *Upland archaeology: what future for the past?* published by the Council for British Archaeology in 1986 and *The Archaeology of the Uplands: a rapid assessment of archaeological knowledge and practice*, also published by the CBA in 1986 in conjunction with the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England. Also, *Prehistoric Britain* (Batsford 1987 and Routledge 2010) and the *AA Glovebox Guide, Ancient Britain* (Automobile Association 1988).

My photo of Tim (centre) talking to the landowners at the Longstone standing stone, Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire, was taken in June 1987 for the front cover of the English Heritage leaflet, *Ancient Monuments in the Countryside* (pictured, right). I really like the way the farmer's wife is touching their sheepdog's head.

Mick Sharp


English Heritage
Ancient Monuments in the Countryside

MICK SHARP/ENGLISH HERITAGE

***The cover of English* Ancient Monuments in the Countryside *leaflet featuring Professor Tim Darvill talking to the landowners next to Longstone standing stone, Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire, in 1987. The photo was taken by Mick Sharp who writes the Sharp Focus column in* British Archaeology**

I agree with Hilary! More archaeology, please

I have to say I am in complete agreement with the comments of Hilary Rock-Gormley in their letter in the Jan/Feb edition of *British Archaeology*.

I also would like the magazine to have more about archaeology and less about archaeologists. Are you likely to return to the old format?

I am of 'mature years' and have been reading the magazine for very many years. It was my ambition to become an archaeologist when I left school, but I discovered that in those days (1950's) you were very lucky to find a paying job, so I became a mechanical engineer instead.

John Woodall

Spot on, Hilary, my thoughts exactly

Very pleased that *British Archaeology* is back on track for its 200th issue!

I admit to opening its envelope with minor trepidation, however, I happily turned the pages much more slowly than recent issues and eventually discovered Hilary Rock-Gormley's letter. It put my thoughts more succinctly (and politely) than I might have done.

By all means share with members a brief summary of what CBA is up to. But keep the 'meat and gravy' of community projects and YAC, etc, for the website not the printed magazine. Don't forget to include some 'overviews' and insightful analysis as well as the latest 'holes and goodies'. Very best wishes for the Season, the New Year and the next 200 issues.

Bob

We look forward to reading your views and welcome further letters from our readers, please send them to editor@archaeologyuk.org . ■

British Archaeology
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my archaeology

Conservator at Drakon Heritage and Conservation reflects on a career that has involved working on the Staffordshire Hoard and what may be the first evidence of crucifixion in the UK

Pieta Greaves

I love the intangible nature of heritage, the beliefs, customs, and stories, as well as the physical traces they leave behind. I grew up on a farm in New Zealand, in a Māori landscape of living heritage as much as ancient monuments. The farm had a pā site, a Māori hillfort.

Our house used the same water well as the pā and my father once found a wood vessel in the well which fell apart when it dried. Little did I know then that one day I would understand why it did that, how to stop it from happening, and that this would be my career.

At that time, if you wanted to be an archaeologist you would do an anthropology degree in New Zealand, and I combined it with geography. After I graduated, I decided to come to the UK as my father is British and I had access to a British passport.

I started by working as a fieldwork archaeologist on development-led excavation projects, but I found I just wasn't suited to it. The outdoor fieldwork was too cold, and I was unfortunate to work on a series of sites where I wasn't finding much.

However, I still had the buzz for archaeology and thought there must be something else, another specialism or strand of the subject which I could pursue instead. I was living and working in London at that time and first came across object conservation during an event I attended at the British Museum. I left thinking I'd quite like to do that and found a course at Cardiff University covering the conservation of objects in museums and archaeology.

The course offered lots of practical hands-on experience and I even got the chance to work on an ancient Egyptian mask. As well as museum objects, I conserved freshly excavated finds, including lots of rivets dug up by Neil Sharples in the Hebrides. This set me up well for my first job in the conservation department of a commercial archaeological unit. Looking back, I think that this was a great way to start my career in conservation as it offered so many different objects and a breadth of different material cultures to work with.

By contrast, some museum positions involve conducting a lot of condition assessments and preventative measures, but you might not actually undertake many restorative treatments on the collections, or you might find yourself focused on only one type of material.

DRAKON HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION

Above: Onsite at Somerset Musuem conservating the Cheddar Brooch

For me, it makes a world of difference to have a direct link with the archaeologists who first unearth an object in the ground. It's that collaboration which I love most, and I find helps to draw more of a story from the object. Not everyone thinks about objects in the same way. My focus is on how to stabilise an object after excavation and revealing hidden details whereas another archaeologist might be interested in how it was made, and another in the object's relationship to other finds in the same context.

The process of conservation itself involves working with jigsaw pieces, but it is also this interdisciplinary thinking and comparison which helps reveal the whole picture.

My career took an abrupt turn after I spotted a unique job advert. Birmingham Museums Trust and the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery in Stoke-on-Trent had recently acquired the largest collection of Anglo-Saxon gold and silver ever found and were looking for someone to coordinate the final stages of conservation.

Thanks to my experience in the commercial sector, I felt confident that I could manage the tight timetable and the vast number of fragments to be conserved and reconstructed, over 4,000 in total. This project has come to define my reputation in conservation, and I wonder where I might be now if it weren't for the Staffordshire Hoard.

The full conservation of the hoard took about six years, and I was involved in the latter half of the project. It took about 10 years from discovery to publication which, believe it or not, is reasonably quick for archaeology, and especially for such a special and complex set of 700 objects.

Having said that, the project never set out to answer everything, just address a core set of questions that people could work from and study further. There are still some broken fragments in the Staffordshire Hoard which haven't been identified, including some beautiful golden garnet encrusted pieces. These could be part of a multitude of different things, but we just have to hope that one day we'll find a parallel object and continue to unravel the mystery.

Thanks to the Staffordshire Hoard I met my now colleague and co-founder of Drakon Heritage and Conservation, Jenni Butterworth, who coordinated the programme for the Historic England-funded research of the hoard.

After that project was completed, Drakon was involved in the reconstructing the helmet, only one of six Anglo-Saxon examples ever found in the UK, and recovered in about 1,500 pieces from the Staffordshire Hoard.

Helmets are emblematic objects for entering the world of the Anglo-Saxons. Everyone understands what a helmet is, how it was worn, and the symbolic as well as practical function to the warrior. For someone who doesn't know anything about archaeology and rarely visits heritage sites or museums, I think it helps if you can visualise the complete object and I don't think that partial fragments have the same impact as a fully restored and reconstructed item such as a helmet.

On initial inspection, period specialists may have ideas about how the fragments of an object fit together but it's not until a conservator starts the process of cleaning and reconstruction that we can test and see what actually works.

The trouble is that there's often missing pieces of the jigsaw. We were careful to call the Staffordshire Hoard helmet a reconstruction of the original object rather than a replica, as we can never be entirely certain about what it looked like originally.

Take the Sutton Hoo helmet, which was originally reconstructed for display in the 1940s and then remodelled and reconstructed following further research in the 1970s. As a conservator, you have to not be precious but see your work as a starting point or resting stop along a journey. Once the hoard project finished, I became freelance and set up a partnership providing heritage services. In the eight years since Jenni and I formed Drakon Heritage and Conservation, we've been fortunate that our work has grown year on year.

I think the key to our success has been to develop relationships with our clients who provide repeat business. The reputation we gained through the Staffordshire Hoard certainly plays its part, but it's also important that I have the necessary professional accreditation as a conservator, as a member of the Institute of Conservation (ICON).

My job is incredibly varied and there is no such thing as a typical week. I might start off with a plan but there will be queries which swerve my attention in another direction, and occasionally there's an amazing discovery which involves dropping everything else to respond to. At any one time, I might be working on projects collaborating with museums, archives, or monuments, as well as archaeological units undertaking excavations.

Right now, I'm working on a set of objects from the Second World War recovered from beneath a floor and there's a stuffed crocodile looking at me from across the desk.

Although I'm best known for my conservation of the metalwork found in the Staffordshire Hoard, my favourite finds to work on are mineralised organic remains of textiles, wood, and leather which, at first glance, might look far less impressive than gold and garnets.

However, it's my observations about these delicate traces, combined with the knowledge of cultural and material specialists, which can unlock precious insights about people in the past.

As well as conservation treatments, my work involves a lot of documentation of the process and the decisions I've taken. Not everything needs conservation. There are certain sorts of objects that are typically cleaned and stabilised before preparation for display, handling, or archival storage – I've cleaned thousands of Roman coins and brooches over the course of my career.

However, I've only ever conserved one nail in my life and that really was one-of-a-kind. It was found lodged in the heel of a Roman burial in Cambridgeshire by Albion Archaeology and is believed to be the first evidence of crucifixion in the UK.

I'm thankfully a long way from the empty trenches when I first embarked on my archaeological career. Now, I have a laboratory full of wonderful things and I am in the privileged position of being the first person to see and handle objects for hundreds if not thousands of years.

People might not realise that not all excavation takes place on site. Often, when fragile or fragmentary remains are found, I recommend block-lifting the items in-situ within the surrounding sediment. This offers the opportunity to x-ray them before carefully excavating them in a controlled environment.

It is often a great shame to be the only person in the room now of an exciting discovery. I like to try and share those experiences with other people so that they can learn more about conservation and the wonders of archaeology. I make sure to collaborate with the field archaeologists and commercial units so that they can see what is revealed in real-time, which can help inform any ongoing work on site and the analysis of other objects.

At Drakon Heritage, we've tried to develop an outward-looking approach. Rather than sitting in our lab, keeping things to ourselves, we want to be able to share what we're working on. I see it as our role to not only reveal the stories of these objects but tell them and enable others to find meanings in those objects as well. We're active on social media sites, including Facebook and Instagram, and I'm amazed by the reception to the videos we post. It always makes my day to read the comments on posts where people not only appreciate the objects we showcase, but see the value of the work we're doing to clean, repair and reconstruct them.

People often say that they could watch our work for hours or that we've opened their eyes to a different aspect of archaeology. I've attended public engagement events, taking objects out from my lab to work on in front of the public. I've found that people often don't like to engage because they think they're interrupting me but I'm there to talk and break down some of the mystique.

We also offer training and hands-on opportunities to get people involved in conservation and have been recently working with volunteers at the Archaeological Resource Centre in Northamptonshire.

We've helped them to reconstruct a group of Roman pots recovered from their excavations in Irchester, finding the joins and glueing them together. We've been reviewing their metal store, learning how to identify corrosion and decide whether an item requires conservation, and our next step will be to clean some Roman coins together.

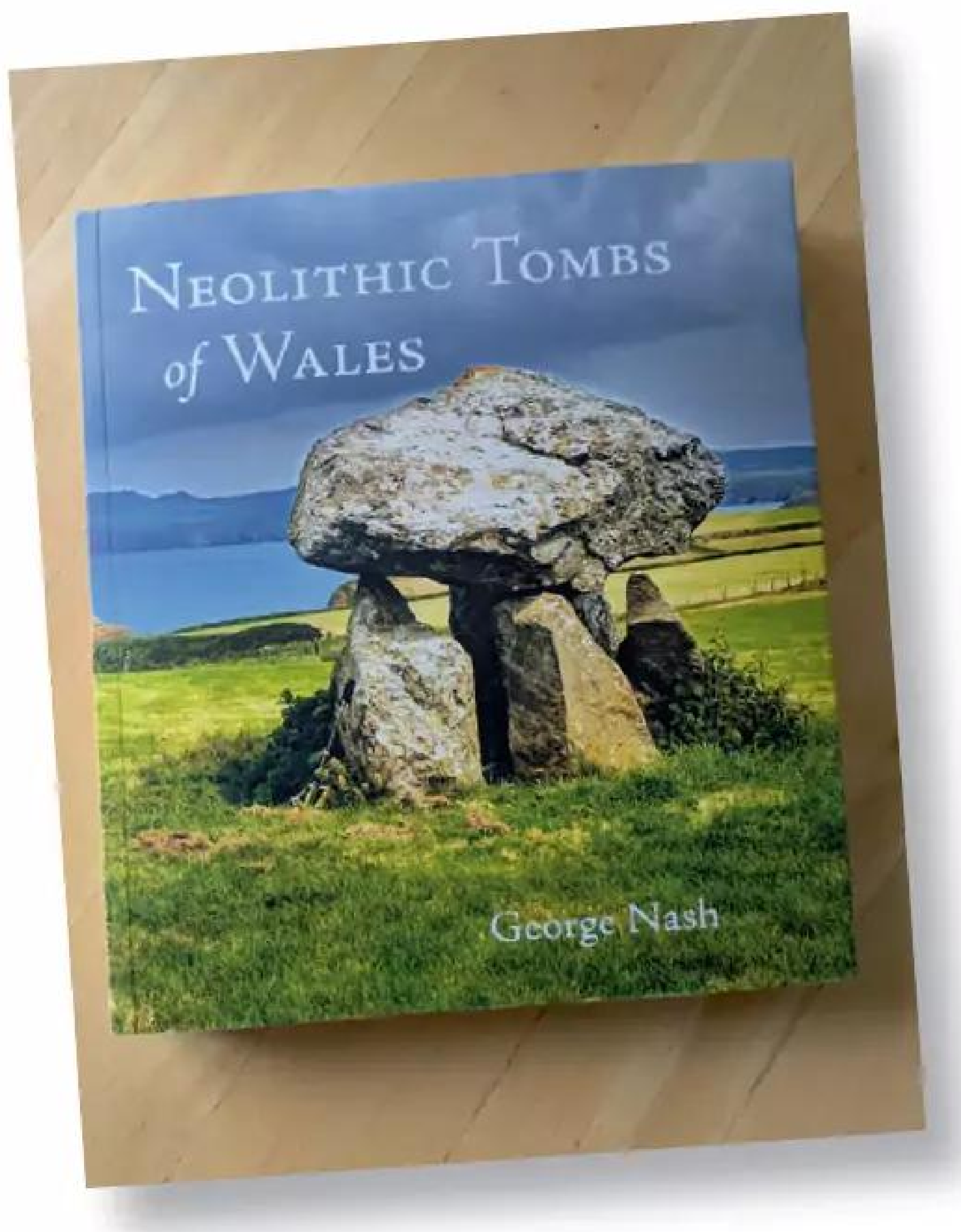
It has been immensely gratifying to share these skills with others so that they can learn to do it themselves. It's about empowering them to make decisions and take care of their own objects.

I'm always mindful of respecting how other people value the objects I handle, whether finds painstakingly recovered from a community excavation or objects revered in a museum collection of living culture. Anthropology has taught me to think of things in a less material sense, to consider the culture of the people who have created, used, and discarded these objects, and the significance placed on them by people today.

When looking down in wonder through my microscope, I'm reminded that it's not just my archaeology. ■

By George Nash
Logaston Press
304 pp pb
ISBN 9781910839720
£25

Neolithic Tombs of Wales: 2nd Edition



Reviewed by Jo Kirton

There are over 250 known Neolithic burial-ritual sites across Wales. In the new edition of George Nash's *Neolithic Tombs of Wales* he explores 100 of these, focusing on those where significant remains are still visible above ground.

As such, it provides an overview of a considerable group of monuments but is not representative of the whole known corpus, as those no longer upstanding or lost to time are not covered, a point acknowledged and reflected upon by the author. However, for the monuments that do feature, we are provided with a rich overview of each individual site. Together, they present a picture of a vibrant tradition spanning some 2000 years (4000 to 2000 BCE).

The Neolithic period is explored in some depth in the 35-page introduction, which provides welcome context for the monuments and regional groupings, particularly for those less familiar with the period or the specifics of Neolithic Wales. It also considers why the monuments may have been constructed, used, and later abandoned.

Nash outlines the five different styles of chambered tombs, and why these different styles developed in the way and locations they did. The volume also explores how the living's perceptions and use of these monuments changed over time and how this process impacted their survival. Each monument is then discussed as part of a regional grouping, which has its own introduction.

These introductions consider the monuments in their landscape setting, providing overviews of the geographical grouping, type, and any obvious similarities that are evident. Nash also explores links to other monuments further afield, providing useful context to the wider corpus.

These discussions are supplemented by brief considerations of previous research undertaken in the region.

The individual monuments are described in much the same manner, including a colour photograph alongside a section and/or plan of each with some supplemented by antiquarian sketches and artwork. In addition, each monument is listed with its Scheduled Monument number and a 10-figure grid reference.

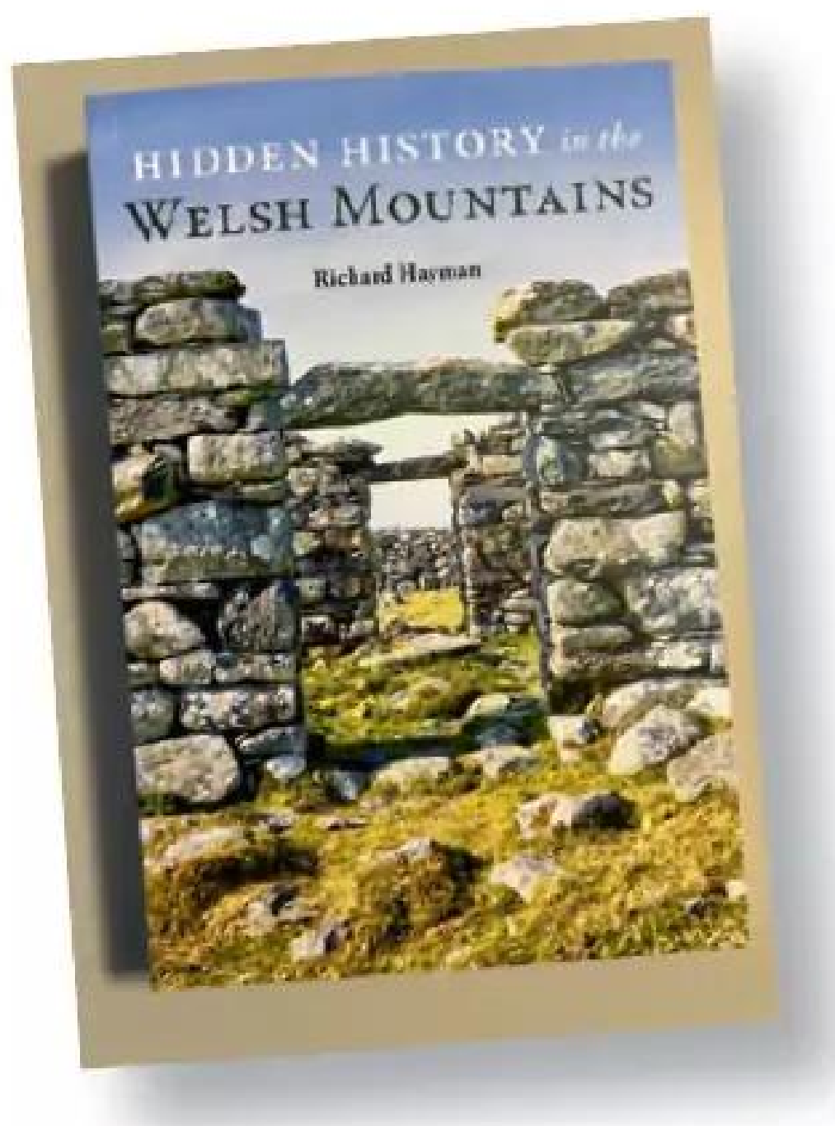
The individual entries are supported by two appendices. The first is a useful summary table of the site data for easy reference and the second lists radiocarbon data for 14 sites. Consequently, the individual entries serve to work well as both a reference guide and a springboard for further research.

The writing style, layout, and varied illustrations ensure that this volume will continue to be favoured by academic researchers and the wider public alike.

The volume is both a practical guide to the monuments and an exploration of the Neolithic in Wales, what came before, and what came after. Well worth the very reasonable price point and a welcome addition to any bookshelf.

By Richard Hayman
Logaston Press
282 pp pb
ISBN 9781910839805
£16.99

Hidden History in the Welsh Mountains



Reviewed by Neil Redfern

The mountains of Wales are rich in natural resources which have been exploited over millennia, often by people who also lived and farmed there.

This human activity has left a wealth of evidence in the landscape, revealing fascinating insights into what life was like in the Welsh uplands.

Featuring more than 200 sites, from Neolithic chambered tombs, Iron Age hillforts, and shepherds' huts to twentieth-century reservoirs, the World Heritage landscapes of Blaenavon and the North Wales slate industry, this book offers both a rich visual history and a practical guide to archaeological features hidden in the Welsh mountains.

Each section provides physical descriptions of the kinds of archaeological evidence to be found, tips on how to identify sites accurately, and an explanation of why these features are found where they are.

This is a book for anyone interested in the history and archaeology of the upland landscapes of Wales.

It offers an enriching history for curious hikers, and the opportunity to enhance our appreciation and enjoyment of upland Wales.

By Julia Farley and Jody Joy
The British Museum London
3728 pp pb (two volumes)
ISBN13 9780861592258
£40 per volume

The Snettisham Hoards Volume I and II: British Museum Research Publication 225

The British Museum
The Snettisham Hoards
Volume I
Edited by Julia Farley and Jody Joy
Research Publication 225
The British Museum
The Snettisham Hoards
Volume II
Edited by Julia Farley and Jody Joy
Research Publication 225

Reviewed by Neil Redfern

These two comprehensive volumes represent the first complete publication of one of the most important Iron Age sites in Europe.

For over 60 years, spectacular discoveries have been made on a wooded hillside at Snettisham, overlooking the northwest Norfolk coast, close to Hunstanton.

The location of the discoveries, at Ken Hill, is known as the 'gold field' because of the large number of gold and silver alloy neck-rings ('torcs') and coins recovered from the site.

Referred to as the 'Snettisham Hoards', these objects represent one of the largest collections of prehistoric precious metal objects ever discovered, and one of the largest concentrations of Celtic art.

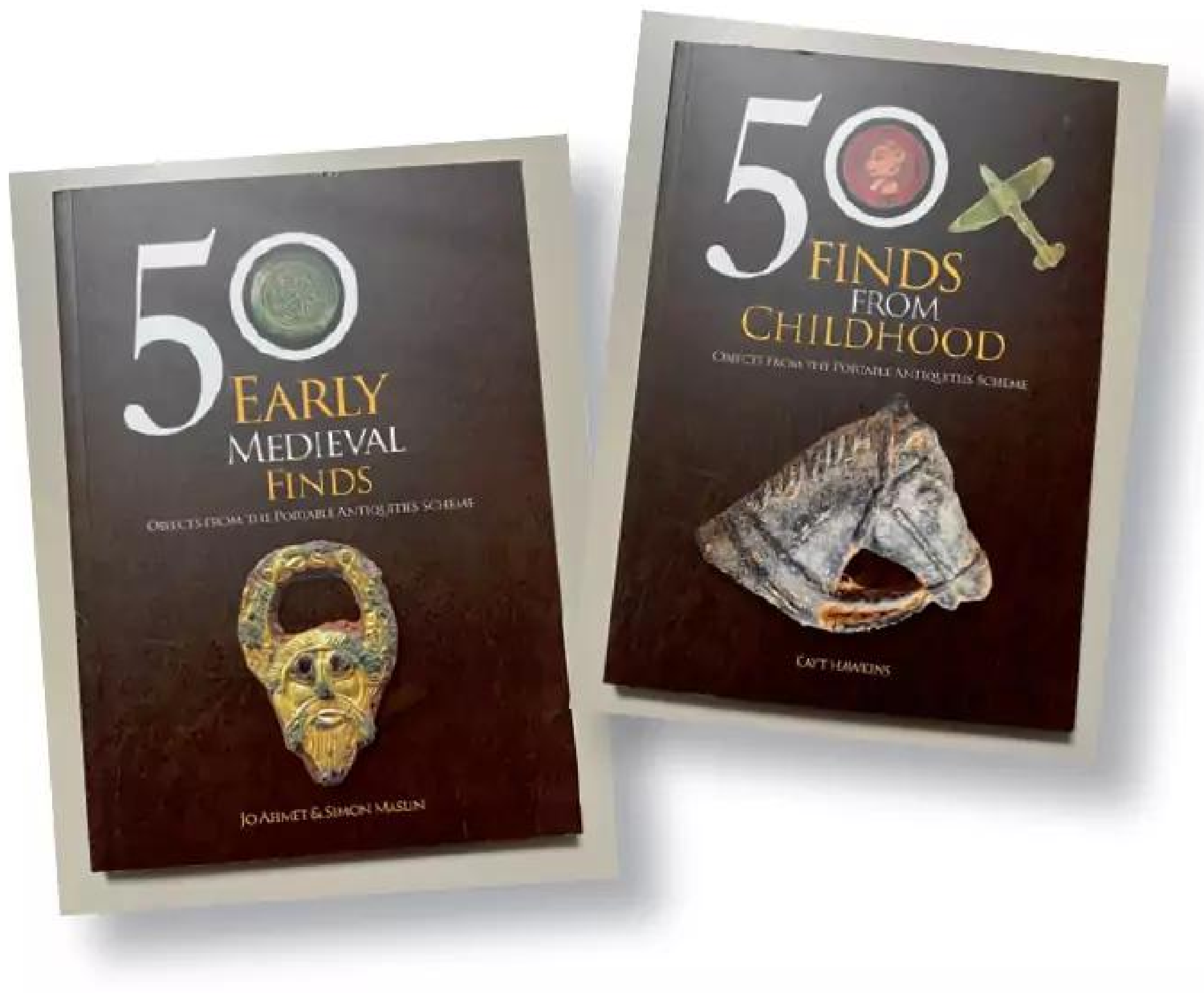
The objects were found in at least 14 separate hoards buried between 150 BC and AD 100 – spanning the late Iron Age and early Roman periods, but with a peak of activity during the late Iron Age.

While the objects from Snettisham are widely known, the site has never been fully published. This book presents the results of extensive scientific analysis, an account of the excavation, and discussions on the importance of torc design and decoration, torc biographies, and the relationships between people, objects, and materials in Iron Age Norfolk.

A final section places Snettisham in its wider social and landscape context. Why were these artefacts deposited here? What was so significant about this location? What purpose did the hoards serve and what sort of society could make such complex and technologically accomplished artefacts?

By Jo Ahmet and Simon Maslin; Kayt Hawkins
Amberley Press
96 pp pb (both books)
ISBN 9781398118911; 9781398114852
£15.99 each

50 Early Medieval Finds & 50 Finds from Childhood: Objects from the Portable Antiquities Scheme


50 Early Medieval Finds
Objects from the Portable Antiquities Scheme
Jo Ahmet & Simon Maslin
50 Finds from Childhood
Objects from the Portable Antiquities Scheme
Kayt Hawkins

Review by Neil Redfern

The many artefacts discovered by members of the public and recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) provide an unparalleled resource and these two additions to the popular series from Amberley Press feature finds from the early medieval period and childhood.

Focusing on the period between the fall of the Roman Empire to the battle of Hastings, the early medieval period is one of our most engaging historical eras.

It covers the formation of the kingdoms and countries of Britain, the establishment of Christianity, Viking Invaders, and semi-mythical monarchs. The finds include weaponry, horse fittings, hack silver hoards, and jewellery, including the wonders of the Staffordshire Hoard.

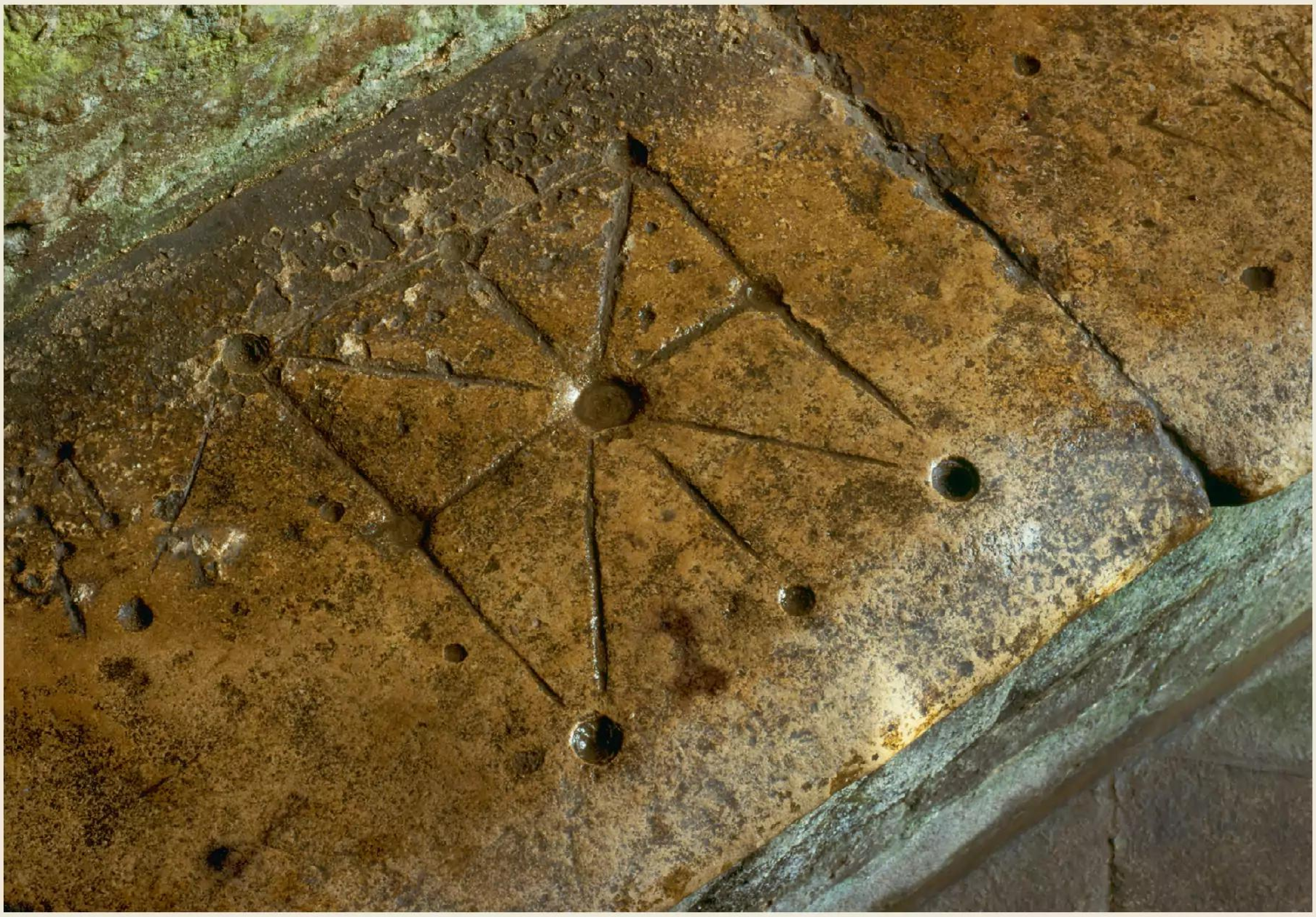
In *Finds from Childhood*, Kayt Hawkins, senior archaeologist at Archaeology South-East, Institute of Archaeology, University College London, selects objects from across England and Wales, spanning prehistory to the modern age.

The finds illustrate a variety of beliefs around childhood, including activities relating to childbirth, infant care, clothing, work, and play. Each object, whether made for children or adapted by them, has been chosen to explore past expectations towards children and their relationships with the wider world.

sharp focus

Mick Sharp visits All Saints, Hough-on-the-Hill, Lincolnshire

Church games



MICK SHARP

All Saints Church, Hough-on-the-Hill, Grantham NG32 2AZ (SK 923465).

At the west end of the mainly medieval church there is a pre-Conquest tower, originally a free-standing watchtower and Danelaw wapentake assembly point

Two stone benches inside the porch are carved with three game boards. The main pattern on the east side is described as 'a choirboys' game called Flag'.

Similar boards are also cut into cloister seats at Canterbury, Gloucester, Norwich, and Salisbury cathedrals, at Westminster Abbey and at Windsor, where 'monks or chorister boys passed the time playing with marbles'.

Throughout the world there are games of 'abstract strategy' with ancient roots. For amusement, competition, and gambling, but such boards may also be used to teach mathematics.

Noughts and crosses (tick-tack-toe), three men's morris (the smaller merels) and nine holes can all be played on a three-by-three grid. In the former, two players take turns to place one of their counters in a hole, trying to form a row (or mill) of their own pieces. The game continues until a player forms a mill and steals the win or concludes if a stalemate is reached when the board is full.

In three men's morris each player has three pieces, which they place alternately. Then, in turn, move one of their pieces to an adjacent hole trying to form a mill. In nine holes, a player may move their piece to any vacant hole. In some versions of the game completing a diagonal row does not win the game. The game was popular in England in the thirteenth century.

More vigorous games and social activities took place in the medieval churchyard, especially in the unhallowed northern part. Quoits, ninepins, tennis, fives (hand tennis played against the north wall with windows protected by wooden shutters), cudgel playing, casting the stone (throwing a heavy feat-stone backwards over your head), wrestling and cockfighting.

Newlyweds danced in the churchyard as did others on holy days (holidays) including church patronal eves, accompanied by pipes, flutes and fiddles.

Churchyards were the village social clubs of the Middle Ages where markets and fairs were held, and religious plays performed. Also 'church ales', organised to raise money for the upkeep of the nave, tower and north churchyard which were the responsibility of the parishioners. Ales also funded charitable causes such as a dowry for an orphan bride.

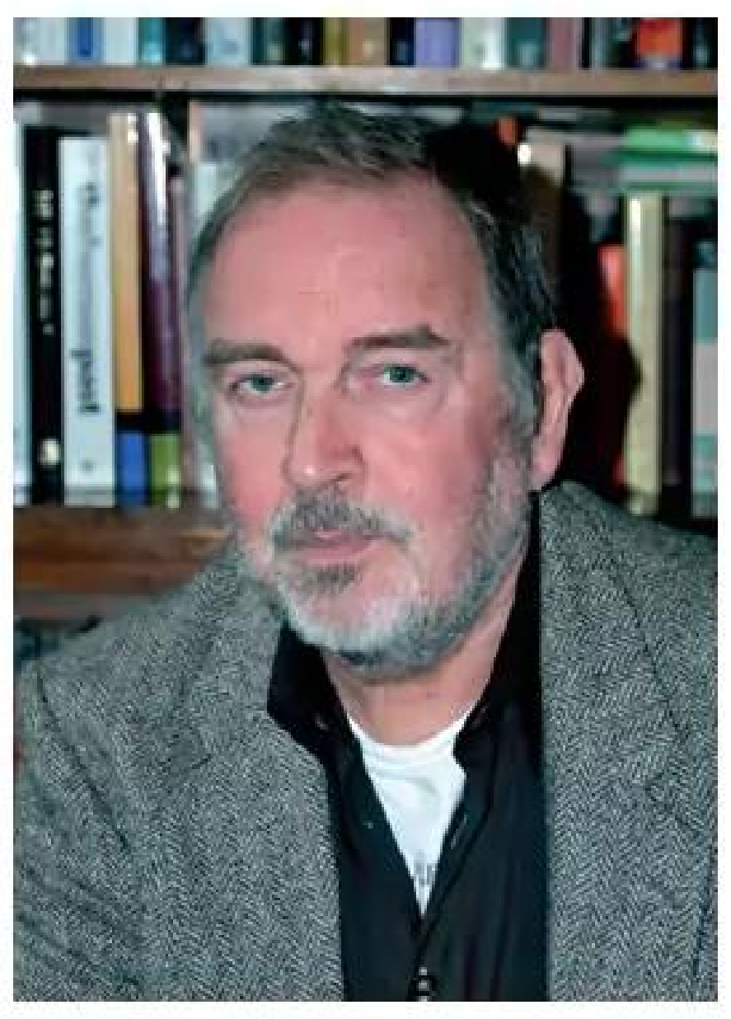
Churchwardens collected donations of malt which was brewed into strong ale in the church house situated in or close to the churchyard; many church houses later became commercial inns. Benches, tables, booths, and wooden stages were set up, the eating and drinking followed by performances, games, and dancing.

At St Edmund's Church in Salisbury, William the bellringer was paid eight pence for clearing up after the merriment.

Some of these activities also took place in the nave, which was originally an unconsecrated space without fixed pews, similar to a modern village hall. By the thirteenth century, bishops and kings, including Edward I (1272-1307), were trying to push miracle plays out of the nave and ban markets from the churchyard along with 'wrestling matches, sports, dances and lascivious games'.

These village customs persisted beyond such edicts, especially in Wales, but Protestantism, the republican Commonwealth, the Methodist Revival, permanent pews, and upright headstones all played a part in their decline.

Dr Greg Bailey on broadcasting



I admit to being a bit picky about broadcasting in general. I believe TV that tells an honest story, that celebrates our collective identity in difference is a wonderful thing.

Perhaps I've been smitten by what some bizarre billionaire bigot has diagnosed a 'woke-mind-virus'. Or, as I prefer to believe, with the climactic series of *Wolf Hall* (BBCTV, 1 Dec 2024) and how I'm reminded just how engaging, emotionally authentic and dramatically powerful six hours of television can be, I have far less tolerance of work that underestimates the imagination and curiosity of its audience.

Never more true than today, the eighteenth-century author of *Common Sense* wrote, "These are the times that try men's souls." So in our immediate perfect storm of sponsored alienation, irrationality, and disinformation posing as free-speech, how should women and men who would seek meaning with science, art, and the humanities (re)act?

Perhaps we might just seek comfort in our own speciality or interest and wait for a rising tide of nonsensical prejudice and cultivated ignorance to recede? *Ancient Aliens* (Prometheus Entertainment; History Channel, Channel 5, and, at one time or another, every commercial streaming channel), presently waiting to be commissioned for a 21st season, has been drip-feeding pseudo-archaeological twaddle into public discourse since 2009.

With such insights as The Mayan Conspiracy; Secrets of the Pyramids; Secrets of the Mummies, not to forget Aliens and the Civil War, the series and its disciples have progressed from asserting that archaeology is invariably wrong to claiming that archaeologists conspire to deliberately hide the truth on behalf (I suppose) of our alien overlords.

Thus, after 20 series of extra-terrestrial trickery it now becomes difficult to find a period of history or prehistory, ancient site, natural phenomenon, or political event that seemingly lacked alien intervention.

As regards the claims of *Mystery on Nan Madol* (episode 172 Jan 2020) which closely follow the particular theories of Graham Hancock, I was privileged to visit remote Pohnpei and Saudeleurian-era Nan Madol and can confirm that, though indeed a wonder of the ancient world, the pillars of the ancient complex were not entirely shaped by hand but are columnar jointed volcanics, or basalt.

I've noticed that while until recently, ghost-bothered housing, alien-probes and spooky TV in general was confined to minority 'speciality' channels and streaming services these are increasingly haunting terrestrial TV and even our treasured national broadcaster.

I note that Charlie Cooper's *Myth Country* (BBC2, Dec 2024 to Jan 2025) is billed by the *Radio Times* as both 'documentary and factual'. As both a follower and recorder of British 'folk' customs I do applaud Cooper's interest in countryside tradition. But while generations of archaeologists have explored the selection, transport, erection and cultural effect of prehistoric standing (or indeed, recumbent) stones, why the presenter insists on investigating their powers of levitation, earth-energy and, yes, their place on ley-lines stretches the definition of 'factual'.

In series one, episode two, the presenter takes his dowsing-rods to our incomparable Avebury to prove some point or other, "It might not be appreciated in our time", says Cooper (or is this his increasingly interchangeable alter-ego, Kurtan?). And, for all us doubters of all things dowsy, the actor/writer says, "It's not nonsense, it's thriving on social media." So there!

I also note a new series of *Paranormal: the village that saw aliens* (Twenty Twenty Television for BBC3 TV, 2024), and for the growing ranks of the spook-curious there was BBC2's *Hauntings* in November 2024 – not to be confused with *Help my House is Haunted* (Discovery) or *Most Haunted* (Apple TV) among very many other TV apparitions.

I'm not even sure that Philomena Cunk (*Cunk on Life*; BBC2 one-hour-plus special Dec 2024) whose extended, witty, but wearing, scatalogical jokes at the expense of worthy academics, even (shockingly enough) historians and archaeologists, remains quite as amusing as when I guardedly welcomed her very first series in this column.

I suppose I wonder if now is really quite the historical moment to unquestioningly celebrate the confusion of both media interlocutor and academic authority? However, as it can do, BBC Radio helped restore my belief in creative synthesis of poetic soundings, and the mattering of archaeology. Radio 4 had been celebrating its famous *Shipping Broadcast* over the New Year period and here on New Year's Day with sound archive from excavations at Sutton Hoo, reflections about the Mary Rose, Cutty Sark, Golden Hind, Victory, and the Fighting Temeraire, listeners could hear *The Shipping Forecast: Shipshaped*.

This was cut-up radio sound poetry at its finest – both ambitiously creative and true. Perhaps TV producers might follow suit and dare to step up with their own archaeological poetics in the challenging months to come?

As an avid television watcher since 1953, and thankful TV worker since 1963, I am still regularly surprised by the emotional and political clout of this broadcast medium fast approaching its first century (technically the first 'narrowcast' was at the Royal Institution, 1926; first proper broadcast was in 1932) in a overwhelmingly online, everything, everywhere all-at-once world.

I ask, how did a set-piece historical drama excite and convince a broad popular TV audience to concentrate attention over six dense hours to a complex of ever-shifting often deadly Tudor politics?

How did an ITV drama provoke government action to finally respond to the awful injustice done to our British postmasters and postmistresses?

How does a popular TV comedy featuring two love stories across two British nations still seem to excite and unite our country, albeit presumably just for Christmas?

Surely, we all need and deserve more such 'true-tales' to speak to our better angels and unite us in the New Year?

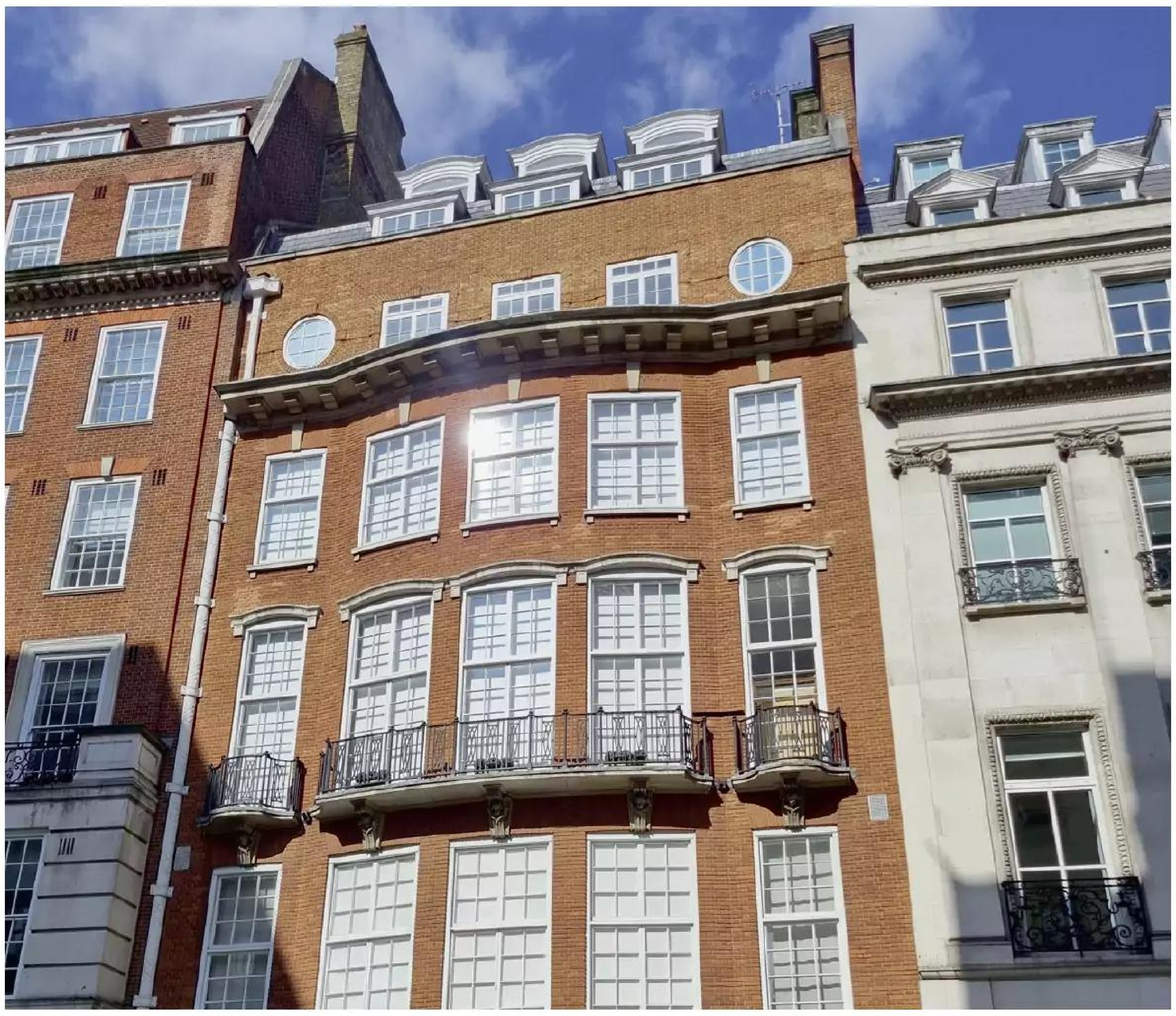
And the new series of BBC's *Digging for Britain* (BBC2, Jan 2025) promises at least one giant early-medieval (all right, Saxon, if you must) sword and one more-or-less giant Dinosaur excavation (yes archaeologists do those now, apparently). ■

Alison Edwards, listed buildings caseworker at the Council for British Archaeology, examines the problems with upward extensions over historic buildings

78. The sky's the limit

The Listed Building Casework team found a worrying trend developing in 2024: developers creating large extensions, or in some cases entire tower blocks, balanced on top of historic buildings. While the creation of new homes through the densification of urban areas is encouraged in planning policy, this must be done in a way which is sympathetic to the character of the existing places.

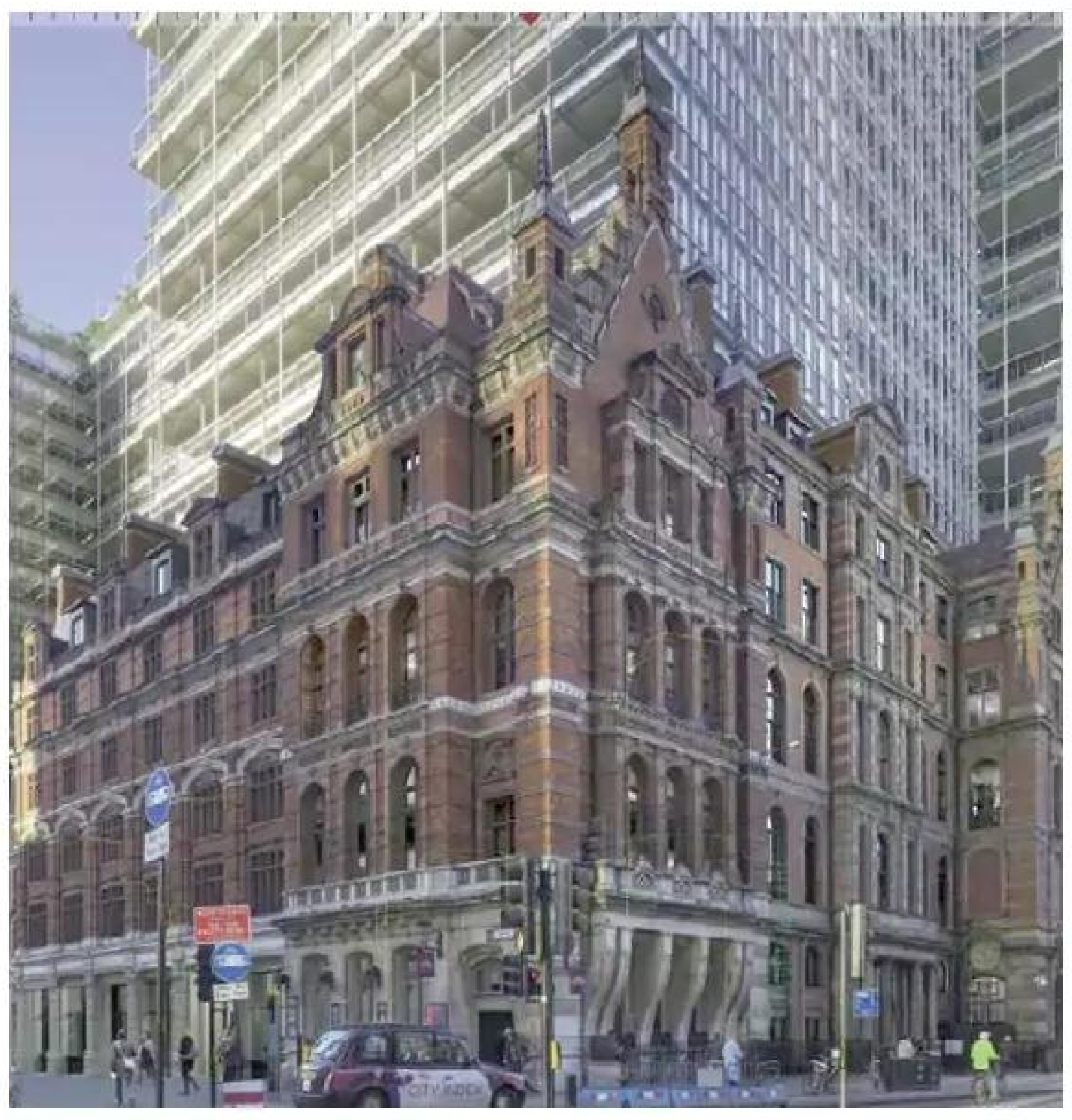
While theoretically the fabric of the listed building may be retained underneath a new upward development, it cannot be argued that infilling the space above a building does not change its character. The modern aesthetics of a large new structure, the change to the building's proportions and architectural character, and the physical impact of putting a new building above an old one – all have obvious impacts which can cause harm.



ALISON EDWARDS

Top right: Sympathetic traditional upward extensions in London

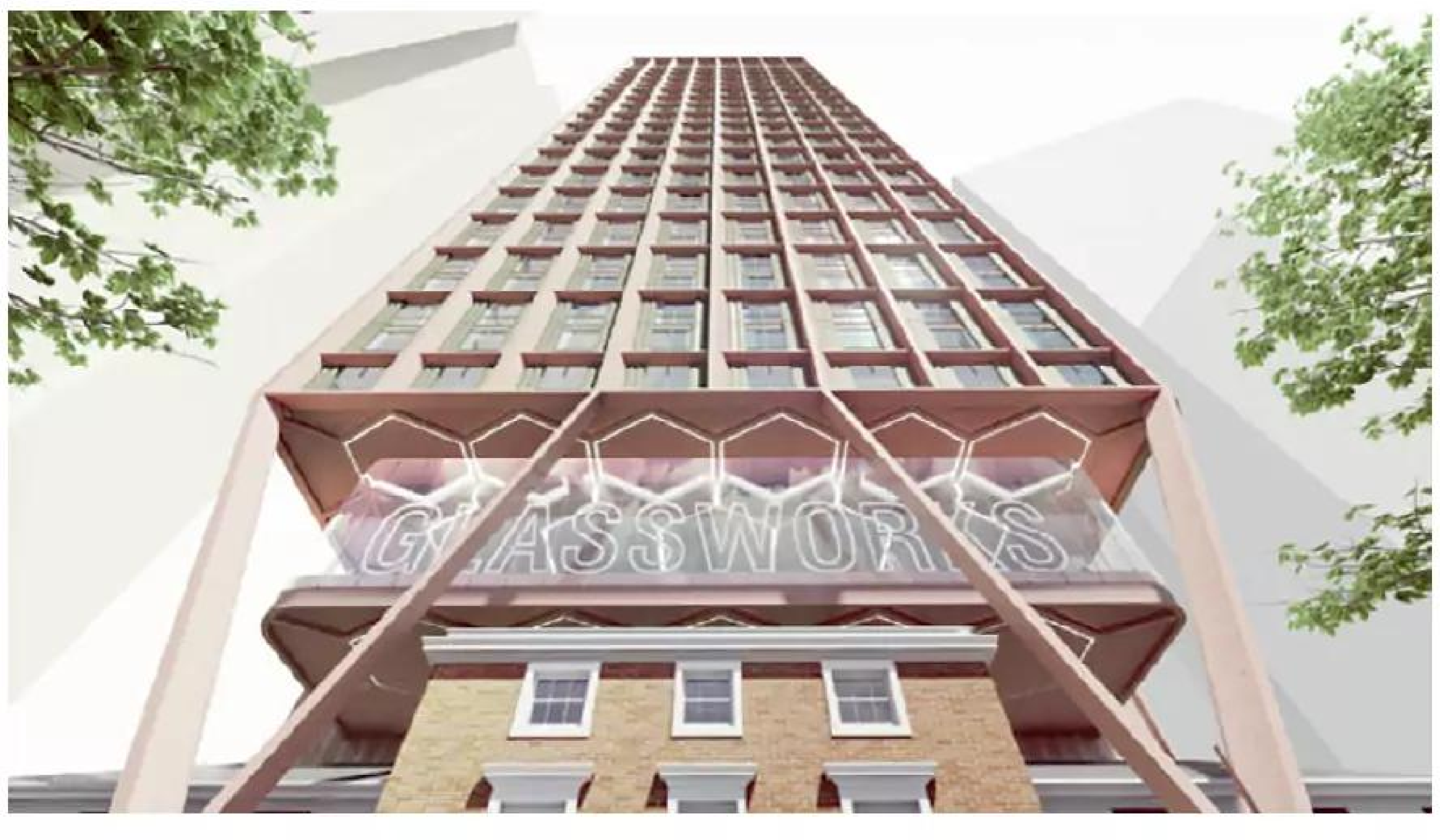
In April, Birmingham City Council rejected a proposal (described by one councillor as 'utterly bonkers') to cantilever a 42-storey tower block on struts over a Grade II listed nineteenth-century building. There could be no more imaginable harm to the setting of a prominent building than by dwarfing it underneath a huge new block. The CBA, along with other amenity societies, had objected strongly to the plans.



HERZOG AND DE MEURON

Right: Dropped proposals for the Grade II Star Hotel at Liverpool Street

After considerable outcry from heritage campaigners, the developers for Liverpool Street Station in London have dropped their plans to cantilever a tower block over the imposing Grade II* listed nineteenth-century Great Eastern Hotel. However, the current set of proposals still include a large tower over the station concourse, blocking all the light from the historic glass roof and changing the way the station is experienced both inside and out.



MARRONS

Below: The proposed 42-storey tower block over a listed Birmingham building

Other listed buildings are at risk from chunky and unsympathetic blocks, including multiple additional storeys, added as new storeys of the existing structure. The effect of these, at worst, is of a new building landing on top of the old one. This obviously harms the character of the building and changes the whole streetscape and local character.

We recently objected to proposals for the Whitbread Brewery complex in central London. This former industrial site includes terraced housing from the eighteenth century and well conserved brewing structures from the nineteenth century, and a Victorian pub historically associated with the brewing company.

Unlike many nearby buildings, the brewery survived heavy bombing during the Second World War, and after brewing ended at the site in the 1970s, parts of the industrial site were converted to commercial uses. The complex forms the majority of the aptly named Brewery Conservation Area, designated by the City of London in recognition of the historic character and significance of the site.

A planning application for the site included proposals to create a new two-storey extension on top of the elegant eighteenth-century terraces fronting Chiswell Street; the angular black modern design would have totally changed the character and appearance of the buildings and caused harm to the wider conservation area.

Unusually, Historic England used its statutory powers and refused to grant consent for the listed building application because of the heritage harm it would cause to the brewery (in London it can refuse permission directly, not just offer advice). The CBA is monitoring the site closely and offering advice as revised plans develop.

Another application for a new upward extension to Carpenters' Hall and adjacent buildings along Throgmorton Avenue and Winchester Street in the

City of London raised similar concerns.

Carpenters' Hall is the home of the historic livery company and was designed in the 1870s incorporating features from their medieval guildhall. After heavy bombing damaged much of the interior, a high-quality restoration and reconstruction project was undertaken in the late 1950s by noted architects Whinney, Son & Austen Hall, with the Banqueting Hall interior designed by Clifford Wearden.

In many ways, Carpenters' Hall encapsulates the story of the economic power of the City of London as a historic commercial centre, including the wealth of the Victorian city and post-war cultural and architectural modernist changes. It stands in a dominant position on a corner, its tall windows and a neo-classical portico making a clear architectural statement. Adjacent, the Grade II listed 1920s neighbouring block on Great Winchester Street (included in the plans) was designed by Mewes & Davis and deliberately reflects the pale stone facing and classical motifs of Carpenters' Hall.

Adaptation and change over time is an important part of the site's significance, and a high-quality new addition could add a new chapter to its architectural development. However, the current proposals would effectively construct a new building on top of the historic structures, rising three to five storeys above the original roofline. This would be too dominant, obscuring the significant design and status of the listed building as a landmark in the streetscape. The CBA objected strongly to the application and hopes to see a different plan for the site which is more sensitive to the historic character of the area.

It is of course possible to achieve sympathetic upward extensions on historic buildings, and this can be a practical way of creating additional housing in densely populated areas such as central London.

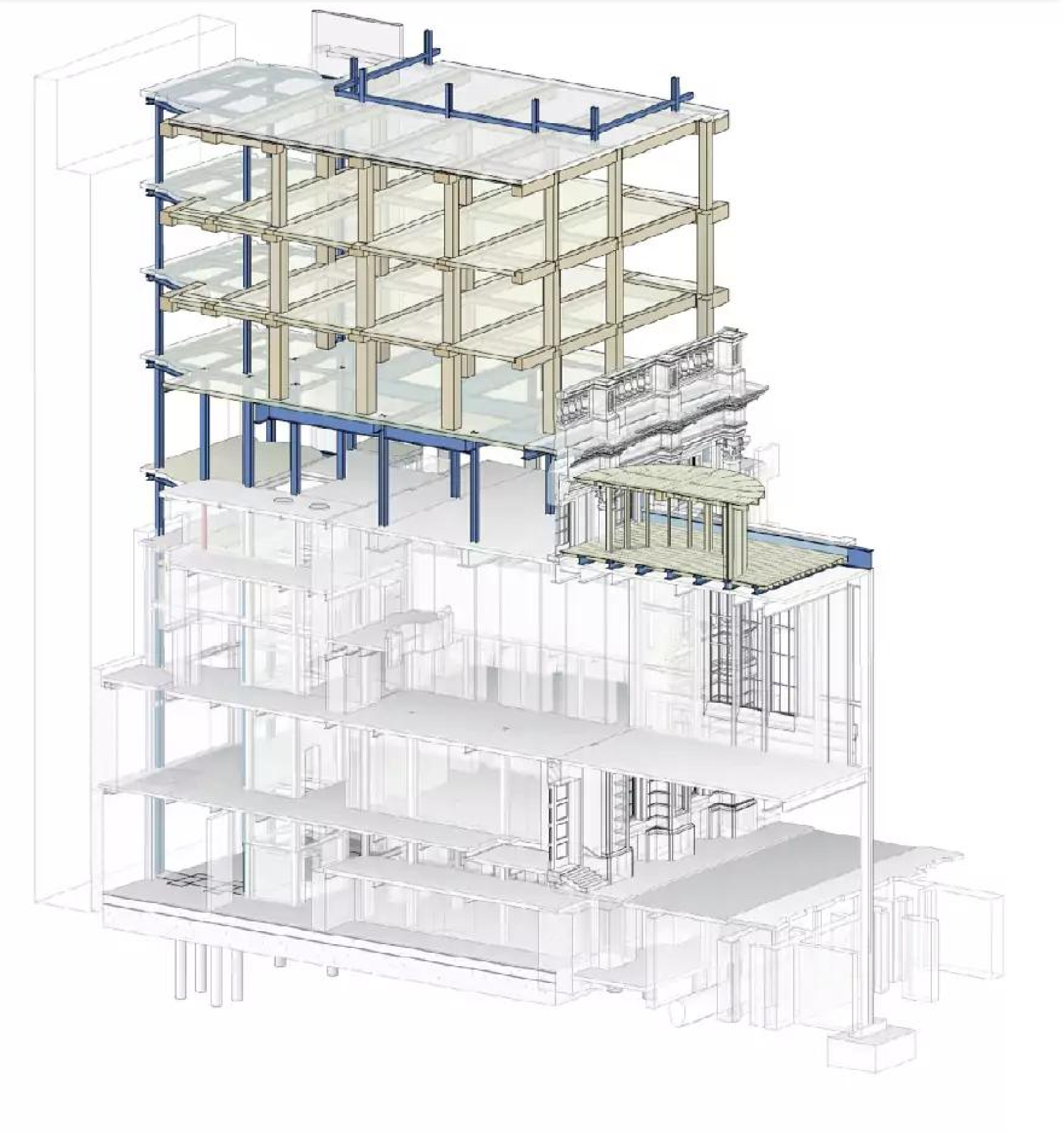
Many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century terraces in London are topped by later mansard roof extensions, allowing an extra storey to be added which suits the architectural character of the historic building and minimises the visual impact from the street.

It is important to consider the height, proportions, and overall character of the building; are the floor levels proportionally lower as the building rises? Was the façade intended as a bold statement which would dominate the street scene? Is the fenestration regular and symmetrical?

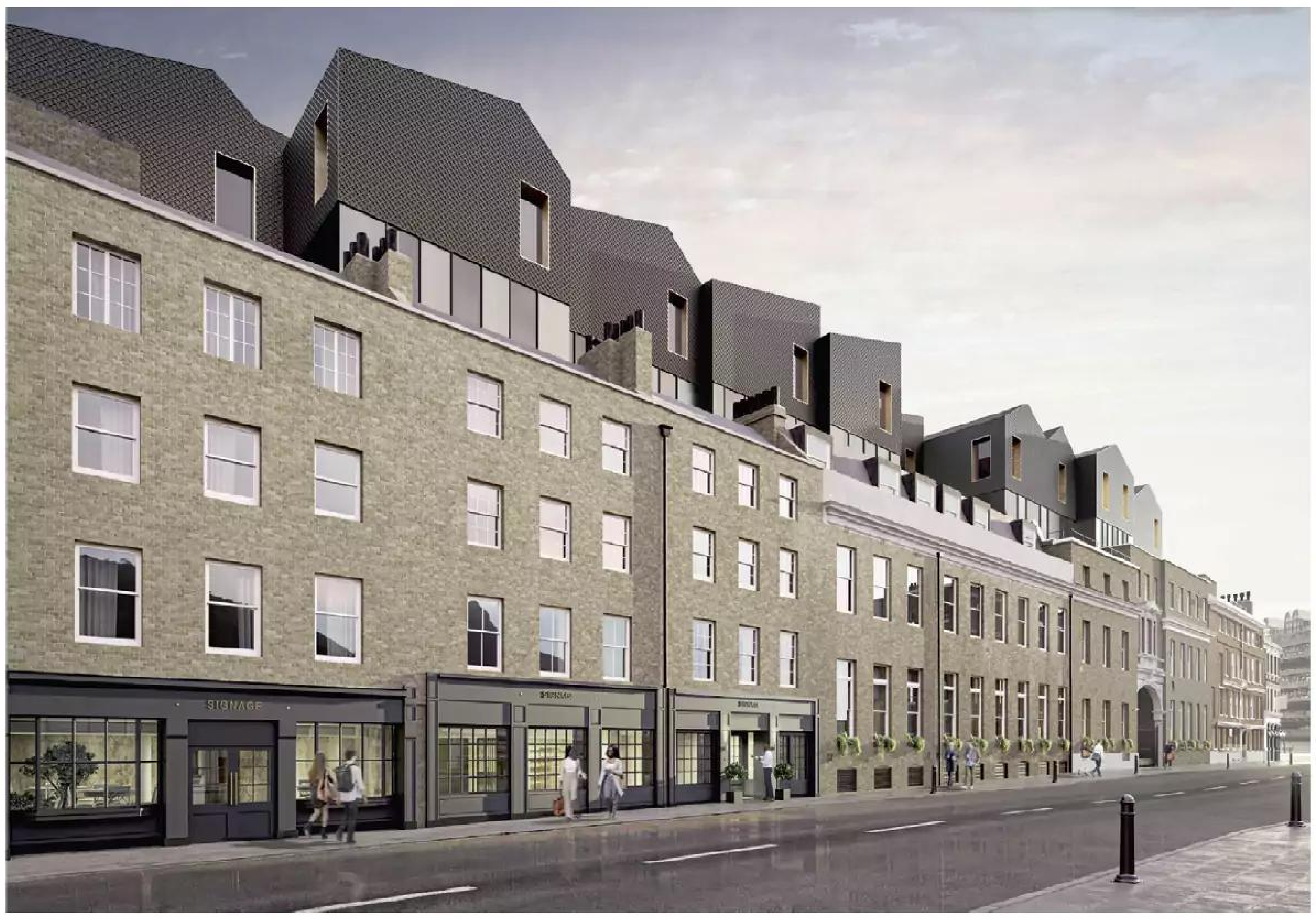
Working with important features of the historic architecture can help to shape new additions which sit harmoniously above the historic building, instead of visually clashing with or overwhelming it.

We do not believe that the space above a listed building should be seen as a void with no limits on new development. This generation's contribution to our national built heritage should not be to overwhelm and hide our historic buildings under huge new constructions.

Our campaigning as a National Amenity Society helps to ensure that historic buildings stay visible in the streetscape, their historic design and character visible to everyone in current and future generations. ■


HEYNE TILLET STEEL

Above: The proposed building above Carpenters Hall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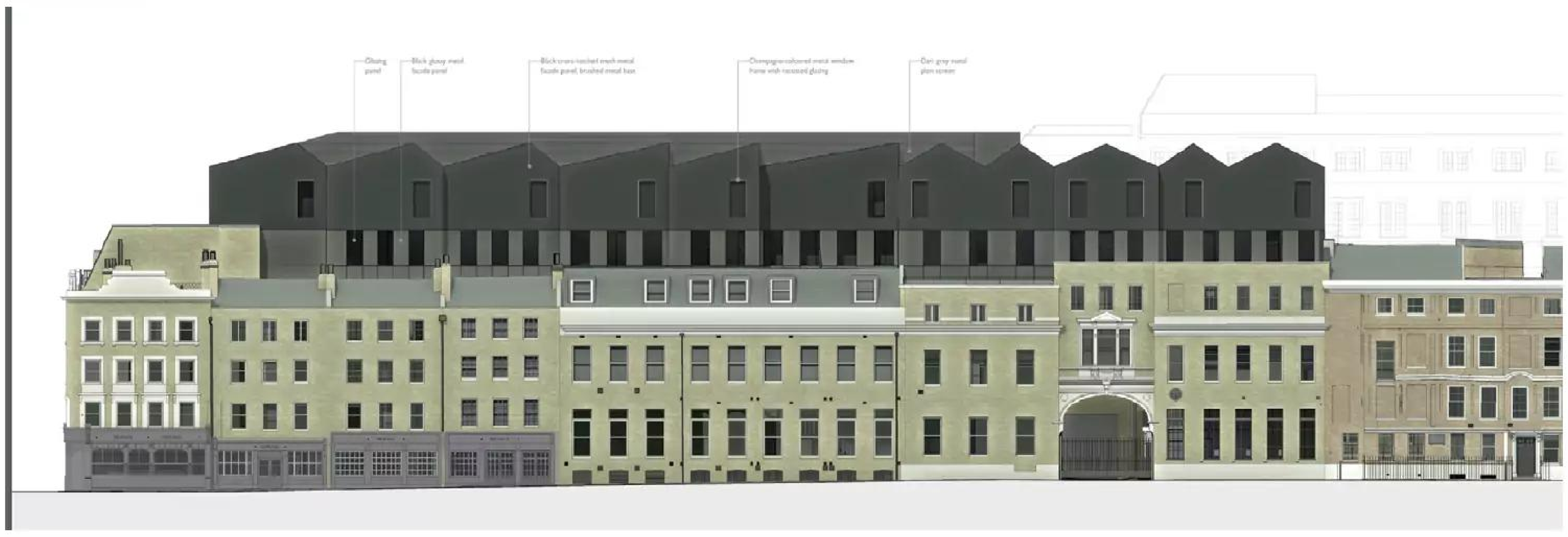

EPR ARCHITECTS

Left and below: Proposed additions to the Whitbread Brewery

Community archaeologist Jessica Lowther on engagement in developer-led archaeology

Toward archaeology for all: Community engagement and public benefit

Headland Archaeology, the UK's leading privately-owned provider of heritage services to the development and construction sectors, is showing its commitment to community engagement and public benefit.

Now part of the RSK group, Headland Archaeology was founded in 1996 soon after the planning policies and guidance radically changed the industry in the early 1990s. This moved the onus for archaeological excavations on to the developer rather than centralised through government services.

Commonly referred to as developer-led archaeology or commercial archaeology, this sector operates as part of the planning system in the UK, ensuring archaeological work is carried out in advance of development through the relevant local planning authorities.

Developer-led archaeology is the major source of archaeological work and discoveries in the UK, uncovering countless important sites and finds that might otherwise remain hidden. With every project comes the potential to reveal valuable information, serving to enhance our understanding of the past.

This knowledge creation is traditionally how archaeologists have measured our contribution to the public. However, as a sector we now recognise that this knowledge comes with many barriers to being accessed, or even just understood, by the wider public. Namely, in where we publish this knowledge, and in the language and presentation methods we use.

As archaeologists we have the unique opportunity to be able to tell the stories of our shared human past, but these stories don't just belong to us, they belong to everyone.

Progress has been made towards embedding public and local community engagement in the archaeological process and the discoveries happening each year in the UK – allowing for more accessible knowledge sharing practices.

This practice is backed by national policy and advocated through resources provided by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers.

HEADLAND ARCHAEOLOGY

Top right: Public engagement at a geophysics workshop in Shetland

Recent large-scale government funded infrastructure projects have also helped lead by example on a range of outputs designed to involve local communities, paving the way for smaller developers to see the benefits of this approach, and how it can enhance the social value of their projects.

Additionally, the work of several community projects both in and out of the developer-led sector, as well as the work of the Council for British Archaeology, are providing key research into the positive effect that engaging with archaeology and heritage has on local communities, as well as on individual well-being.

Headland Archaeology has a long history of engaging the public in the work we do and the discoveries we make through opportunities such as site open days, public events, local talks, webinars, and interpretation boards.

With the introduction of a dedicated Community Archaeologist in 2021, Headland made a significant step towards increasing capacity to deliver engagement and outreach, and developing new ways to share the findings of each new project we undertake.

With dedicated specialist staff we work with our clients to tailor engagement plans to the needs of the project, the developer and, importantly, local communities. Using this process, we have steadily increased community engagement in our projects, as well as diversifying the ways in which we share knowledge.

One of our recent additions to how we share knowledge has been the introduction of our podcast channel. HeadlandArchPod was developed initially to share information about projects in a more accessible way. The channel is available on Podbean, Spotify, and Apple

Podcasts, where avid podcast listeners are already accessing information.

Our first podcast series focused on one project and featured interviews with site staff that covered aspects of the fieldwork, while our in-house specialists explained their work by sharing finds and environmental analysis. We were also able to speak to the local planning archaeologist to familiarise listeners with how developer-led archaeology sits within the planning system in the UK.

Last year, during the Festival of Archaeology, our podcast channel featured interviews with our staff about their work at Headland. This series aimed to highlight the range of roles available in developer-led archaeology for those looking for a career in archaeology.

The steady increase in community engagement for our clients has also seen us create educational videos, undertake school visits, and facilitate public displays. We have also developed online interactive maps utilising expertise from staff in one of our specialist departments, Technical Services.

Headland Archaeology has a wide range of specialist departments, which enables us to share all aspects of the work we undertake, and how each specialism contributes to the story of an archaeological site or find. Over the last few years, we have been able to deliver on- and off-site community workshops in topographical and geophysical surveys, as well as produce educational videos detailing how geoarchaeology can help us to reconstruct past environments.

Currently, we are working on engaging our clients in the initial stages of project development, to ensure engagement can be more embedded throughout the work. This process can also increase the opportunities for community consultation on developing engagement plans that more effectively meet the needs of local communities.

Continuing our in-house collaboration, we are also working towards creating more opportunities for the public to share in some of the incredible work undertaken by specialists to further our understanding of archaeological sites.

Roman Archaeology
Bicker Fen
VikingLink
Anglo-Saxon
Bicker Fen
HEADLAND ARCHAEOLOGY
Site Collection

HEADLAND ARCHAEOLOGY [2]

We are excited to continue to grow the ways in which we can engage local communities and the wider public in the work we do and the discoveries we make.

As archaeologists, we know that archaeology can be thrilling, fascinating, and can connect us both to something bigger than ourselves, but also to each other. We know that still more needs to be done to ensure that archaeology can truly be for everyone, and we are proud to work towards this knowledge sharing and engagement as standard within developer-led archaeology. ■

Above: Headland Archaeology taking part in a public display event in Warwickshire

Left: A geophysics workshop in Shetland

HeadlandArchPod can be found on various podcast platforms, including via this link to Spotify

HeadlandArchPod

Anna Robson, Youth Advisory Board member at the Council for British Archaeology, asks:

How can uncovering notions of pride and connection to local heritage among young people improve the museums and heritage sector?

CBA

Top: Participatory activity following the talk, discussing the audience member's own feelings of pride and connection to their local heritage

In 2023, I explored youth engagement in museums and heritage for young people in the North East, as part of my master's degree dissertation.

This research built on personal experiences as a young person trying to get into the heritage and museum sector, observations I had as I became more knowledgeable about the sector, and the scrutiny I have faced for not relocating to progress my career.

My research discusses levelling-up, regional disparity, and place-based emotional attachment, examining how local heritage engagement impacts civic engagement and connection among 16-to 18-year-olds.

The key question was whether the lack of nationally funded and sustainable heritage projects in the North East affects young people's pride and connection. I also collected data to gauge the actual feelings of young people regarding how much they wish to engage with their heritage in the North East.

'Pride' and 'connection' in relation to heritage?

There is limited knowledge about the emotional outcomes of engaging the older range of young people (16+) outside of formal education, and heritage or museum venues.

Most published material is specific to museum projects or are broad surveys like the 'Taking Part' surveys, covering wide regional demographics and wide age ranges. No study analyses adolescents who are not currently involved in heritage projects (e.g. are already a youth board member or a volunteer), leading to biased analyses of already engaged youths' thoughts and feelings.

The study bases 'pride' on the concepts of heritage pride and civic pride. This approach allowed me to investigate how pride in 'place', and local history or heritage, can influence a young person's desire to engage in local heritage projects, or visit local museums.

To explore the concept of emotional connection, a theory called the 'person-process-place tripartite framework' was used, which helped me to examine how the young people (person), their emotional attachment (process), and their interaction with local heritage (place), worked together.

Emotional connection varies widely among individuals and is often tied to personal significance. For this smaller research project, 'connection' was deliberately left undefined in the questionnaire, allowing young people to interpret it themselves.

Other projects

Research reveals a regional disparity in youth engagement in the North East compared to other areas of the country. Unlike other areas, particularly London, the North East lacks opportunities, such as large-scale projects, youth panels, and internships, which are accessible to all young people.

The absence of nationally-funded projects like Kick the Dust and Shout Out Loud is notable, often replaced with short-term projects attempting to fill this void. However, due to funding constraints, highlighted by Dickenson (2021) and Chris Batstone from Arts Council England, therein lies a vicious cycle of funding which is causing significant barriers for long-term youth engagement.

Previous studies have shown that learning about local areas boosts pride and connection in young people. However, heritage-based projects typically target primary-aged children in schools rather than non-engaged youth in out-of-school settings.

Scholars agree that engaging in local heritage fosters a symbiotic relationship, increasing pride and community connection. Projects like museum interpretation, heritage trails, local pedagogy, and historical enquiry have been shown to improve emotional outcomes among their youth participants. This project's findings, set in the North East, show a clear correlation between engagement, historical knowledge, and increased connection to local heritage.

So what did our young people say?

A total of three schools participated in the questionnaire, equalling a total of 78 individual responses, representing an even localised distribution and a mix of different education institution types (a small sixth form, a medium-sized secondary school, and a large college). They told us the following:

The demographic data indicated a very small proportion of young people who visit sites by themselves, with the majority visiting with parents/guardians. Seventeen had only visited with their school.

The museums or heritage sites most visited are those within the young people's immediate locality.

No participant knew about any heritage-based projects occurring in the North East. There is a significant lack of large-scale youth engagement projects in the region, which is an integral ingredient for increasing access to heritage to those who face access barriers.

Young people are clearly eager to be involved in more local heritage-related activities in their area.

A third of participants actively sought out activities relating to heritage, museums, and history but only four participants could provide a specific example, in which most responses were long- or short-term volunteering. The reason for this was highlighted in their long-form answers, with one reading:

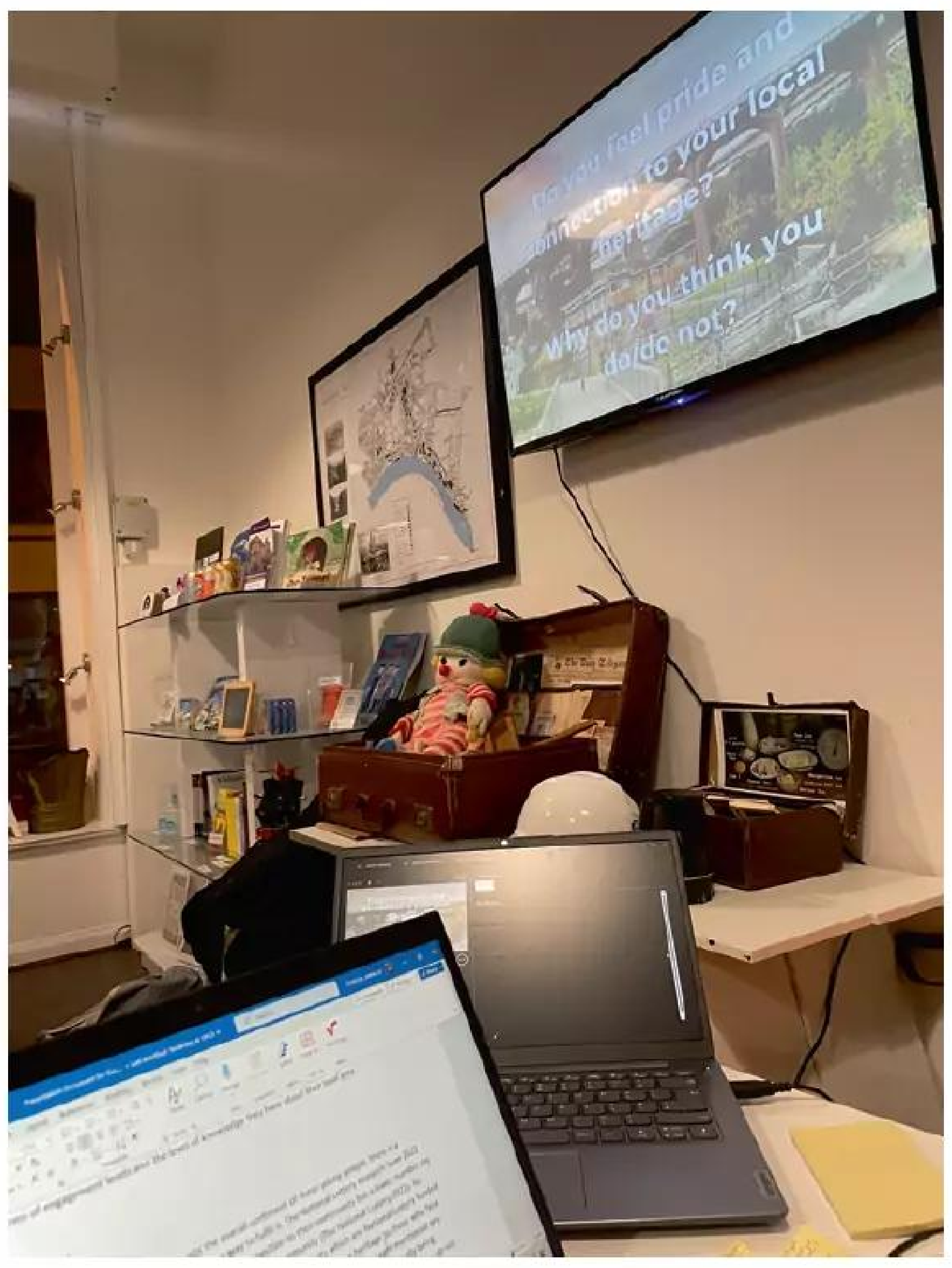
"There aren't many in the area and the ones that exist are underwhelming, not greatly maintained, and hard to find information about."

The fact that no participant is currently involved in any kind of heritage project is evidence that: Projects currently being employed in the North East are not having a wide enough reach; are not very long lasting; or do not interest young people. In terms of pride and connection to heritage, the following results were realised:

- There is a noticeable lack of connection between young people and their local heritage, and a diminishing sense of pride towards their heritage.
- Young people were more likely to feel pride about their regional identity rather than pride in their local heritage.

When asked about connection and place attachment, participants commonly referred to their immediate locality, which was clearly shaped by where they live: "I live in Burnopfield and I know that this area and many of the surrounding areas were mining villages."

"Mainly about the coal mining and Margaret Thatcher, but also some about the ship building along the quay side. This was mainly taught to me by my grandfather who used to work in the coal mines."


Do you feel pride and connection to your local heritage?
Why do you think you do/do not?

Centre left: The first public talk presented of this research held at the visitor centre of the Ouseburn Heritage Trust in Newcastle

The research was able to demonstrate that young people who actively engage with museums and heritage are more likely to feel a strong sense of pride and connection. In addition, they were more likely to offer detailed recommendations for improvement, indicating their potential as advocates for the heritage sector. However, only 15% of participants felt like their voices are being heard, highlighting the importance for youth to be involved in community and regional decision making.

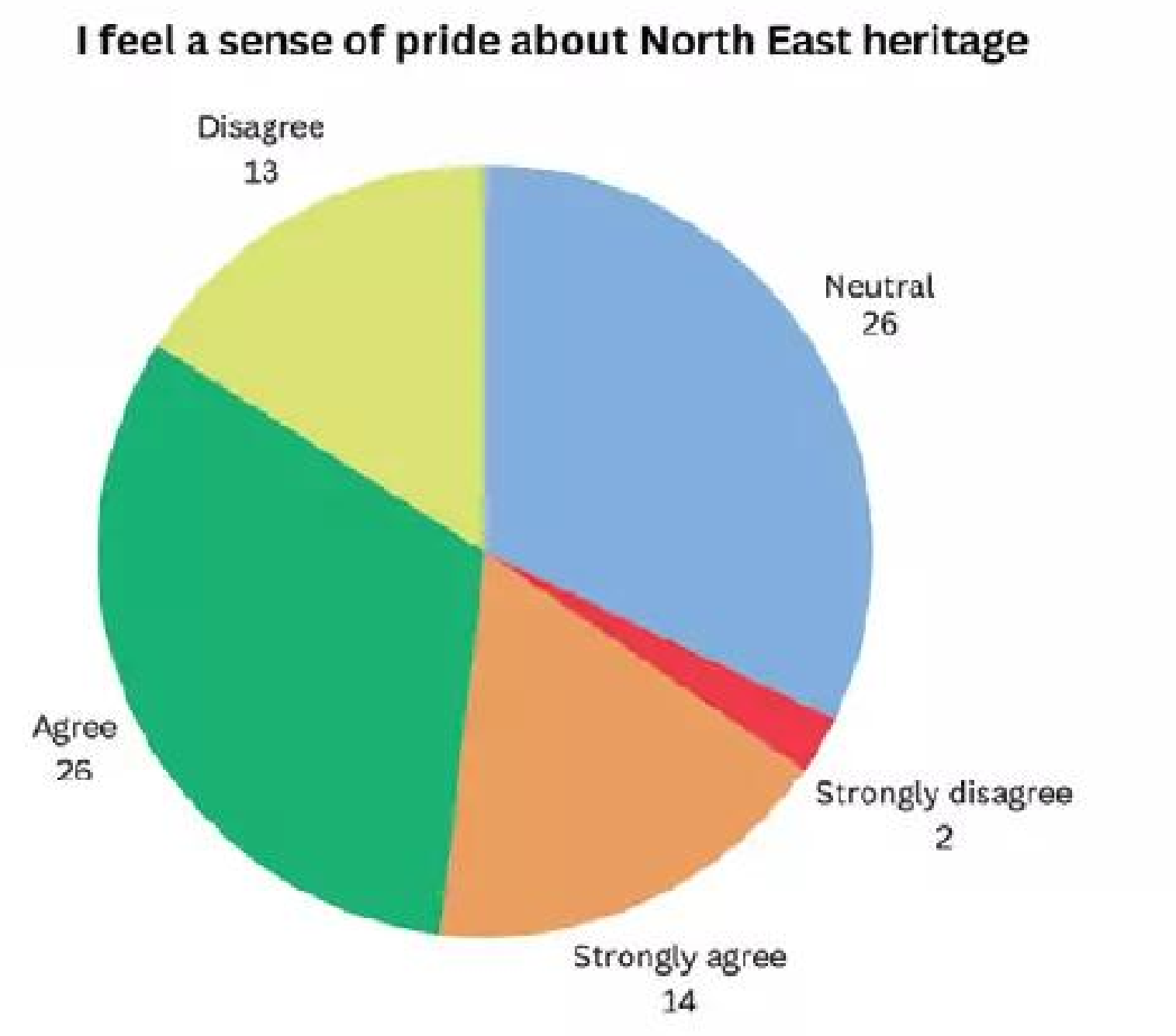
These findings underscore the importance of engaging young people in heritage to foster pride and drive sector improvements.

For a full overview of the data, see: https://www.archaeologyuk.org/resource/social-history-curators-group-journal—pride-and-connection-article.html

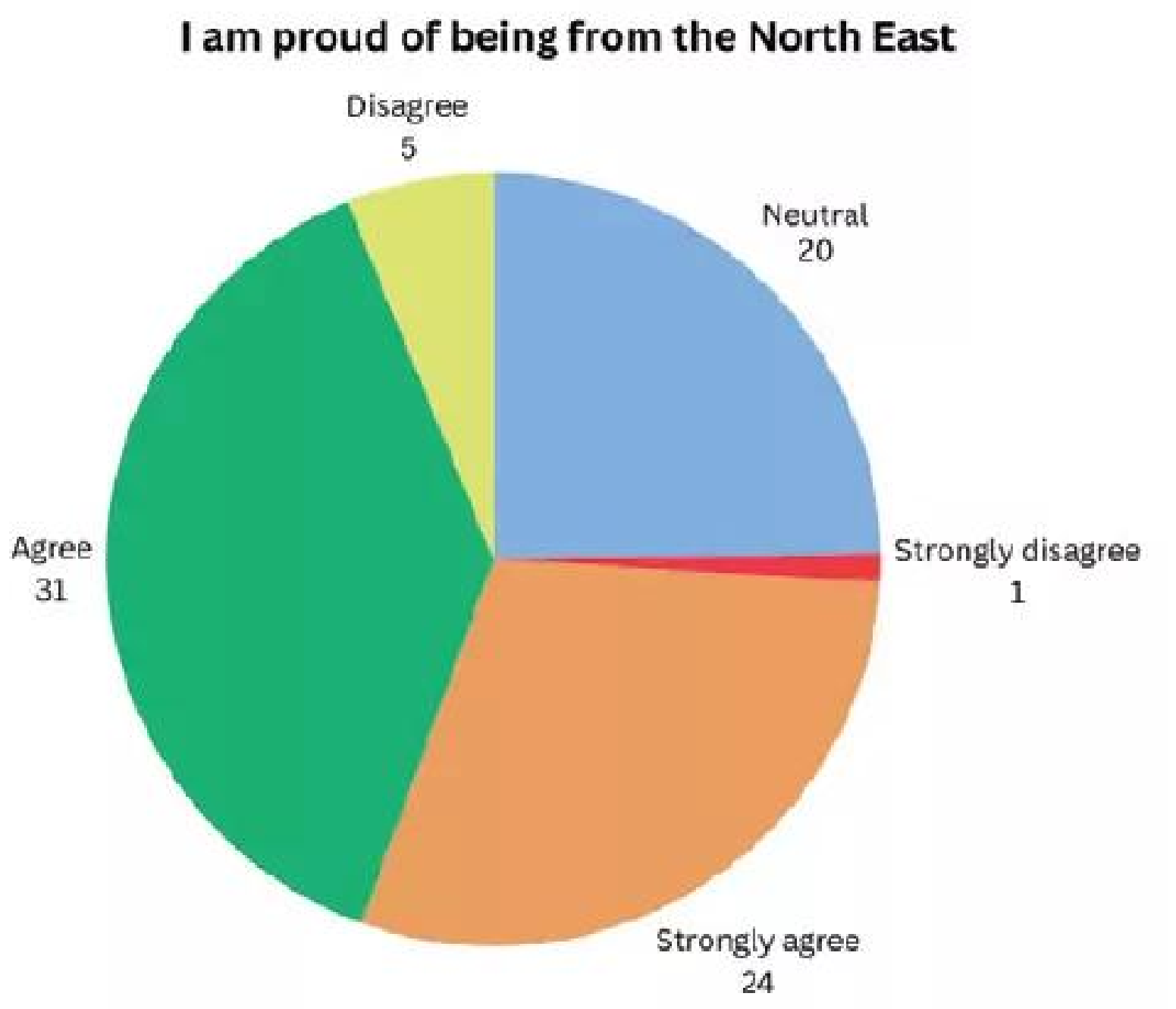
Young people's suggestions:
To improve the museums and heritage sector in their local region

The participants in my study suggested five key actions to increase engagement among their peers in the North East:

- More interactive projects.
- Better use of social media for promotion.
- Stronger links with secondary schools and their curriculums.
- Increased focus on local history.
- Support for those with financial restrictions.



Left above: Graph showing responses to the question of whether respondents felt a sense of pride about North East Heritage



Left below: Graph showing responses to the question of whether respondents felt a sense of pride being from the North East

These recommendations reflect the issues that sector professionals are currently addressing, and further indicate that the current efforts to increase heritage access for young people are relevant and impactful, targeting areas identified by young people themselves.

The 2018 Museums Audience Agency report tells us that North East museum audiences most likely visit venues closer to home. This, alongside the demographic data from my research, is evidence of the importance, having more place-based heritage projects that are both appealing and accessible to older young people.

As research has shown, most place-based pedagogical teaching or curriculum embedded heritage projects are completed in primary education because this is what the schooling system and the curriculums allow.

This, alongside the recommendations from the young people who took part in the research for more local history to be taught in schools, serves as evidence for the government that there is a marked enthusiasm among young people to continue learning about their local history through their schooling. ■

Coprolites

Make and excavate archaeological coprolites in this YAC activity

You might be surprised to find out that the Young Archaeologists' Club's most popular activity on the 'Things to Do' page is related to poo. In fact, the 'Make and Excavate Archaeological Poo' activity is always at the top of the list when we look back at the annual stats on the YAC website – https://www.yac-uk.org/things-to-do.

For most people, the idea of finding old human poo is disgusting. And the idea of dissecting it and looking at it carefully through a microscope is even worse! But this is exactly what some archaeologists do. Fossilised poos are called 'coprolites' by archaeologists, and they can include loads of evidence to help us understand the environment people in the past lived in.

When archaeologists find a coprolite, they carefully examine it to uncover its secrets. First, they might study its shape, size, and colour. Then, they break it apart (using tools, of course – no bare hands!) and look for tiny clues inside.

These clues might include bits of food that didn't fully digest, like seeds, grains, or bones from small animals. By identifying these pieces, archaeologists can learn what people ate for dinner in the past!

But that's not all. By looking at coprolites through a microscope, scientists might find pollen grains, which could show what plants were growing nearby. They could also spot parasites – tiny creatures that lived in people's stomachs – which tell us about some of the health problems people might have had in the past.

Sometimes, the evidence inside a coprolite can even reveal how people prepared their food. If you found crushed plant seeds, it might mean someone ground them up to make flour or porridge. Or what if there's evidence of cooked meat? That could show they used fire to roast their food.

Activity: Crafting a coprolite

You will need:

- 2 cups of flour
- 1 cup of salt
- Tablespoon of vegetable oil (plus a bit extra for oiling the finished poos)
- Beef stock cubes
- Warm water
- Brown paint (optional)
- Popping corn
- Pumpkin seeds
- Paper plates
- Chilli flakes
- Tomato and pepper, seeds and skin
- Large mixing bowl
- Tablespoon
- Wooden lolly sticks or cocktail sticks

Why not have a go at making some poos from the past to practise your excavation and investigation skills!

Below is the basic method and you can find examples of contents from different eras on the activity webpage - https://www.yac-uk.org/activity/make-and-excavate-archaeological-poo. There is also an excavation sheet which will help you to record the evidence that you find. Use the evidence to work out who 'did the poo'?

Excavate

Congratulations! You've now made your fake coprolites. Get your brothers, sisters, friends, or parents to excavate them and collect the dietary evidence (see photo above left).

Use lolly sticks or cocktail sticks to make sure you don't miss anything – some of the evidence is really small. ■

Visit www. yac-uk.org for more

Method

1

Mix together the flour, salt and oil in a big bowl.

2

Then add warm water to the stock cubes to make a thick gloopy dark brown paste.

3

Add the gloopy paste into the floury mixture. You'll need to get your hands in and squish it together! If the mixture is too dry, you can add more water or you may wish to add some brown ready-mixed paint to make the mixture browner and stickier.

4

Mix, squish, and knead until you have a solid brown lump and then roll out sausage shapes for your poos!

Now, it's time to add the dietary evidence to your poo.

5

For example, for an Aztec poo, add corn or maize, pumpkin seeds, and the skin and seeds from plants like tomatoes, chilies, and peppers – these are parts of the foods that Aztec people ate, which might not have been fully digested.

6

Make sure you roll your poo to hide the evidence inside it! Put a little bit of oil on your hands and rub this onto your finished poos. This will make them look really realistic and a bit yuck.

Time Required: 30 minutes to make and 20 minutes to excavate

Dr Chloë Duckworth, reader in Archaeological Science & Public Engagement, Newcastle University, reflects on a recent invitation to a reunion, and asks, whether:

“Archaeology is people?”

I was in my office recently, checking emails, when the invitation to a reunion popped into my inbox. I opened it with surprise and delight, for this was no ordinary get-together: it was an offer to return to the site in Greece that, almost a quarter of a century ago, had given me the opportunity and the means to develop a career in archaeology.

It all began when I was an undergraduate at the University of Nottingham. We had a wonderful department, housed in its own building (well, along with Classics), complete with a commercial unit, drawing office, and a weird big ‘A’ frame that leant up against the wall in the student common room.

Our lecturers for the most part seemed strange, esoteric figures. The one or two of them who were faintly relatable to us just came across as weirdos in training; like Hobbits, with young faces but 50 years already under their belts.

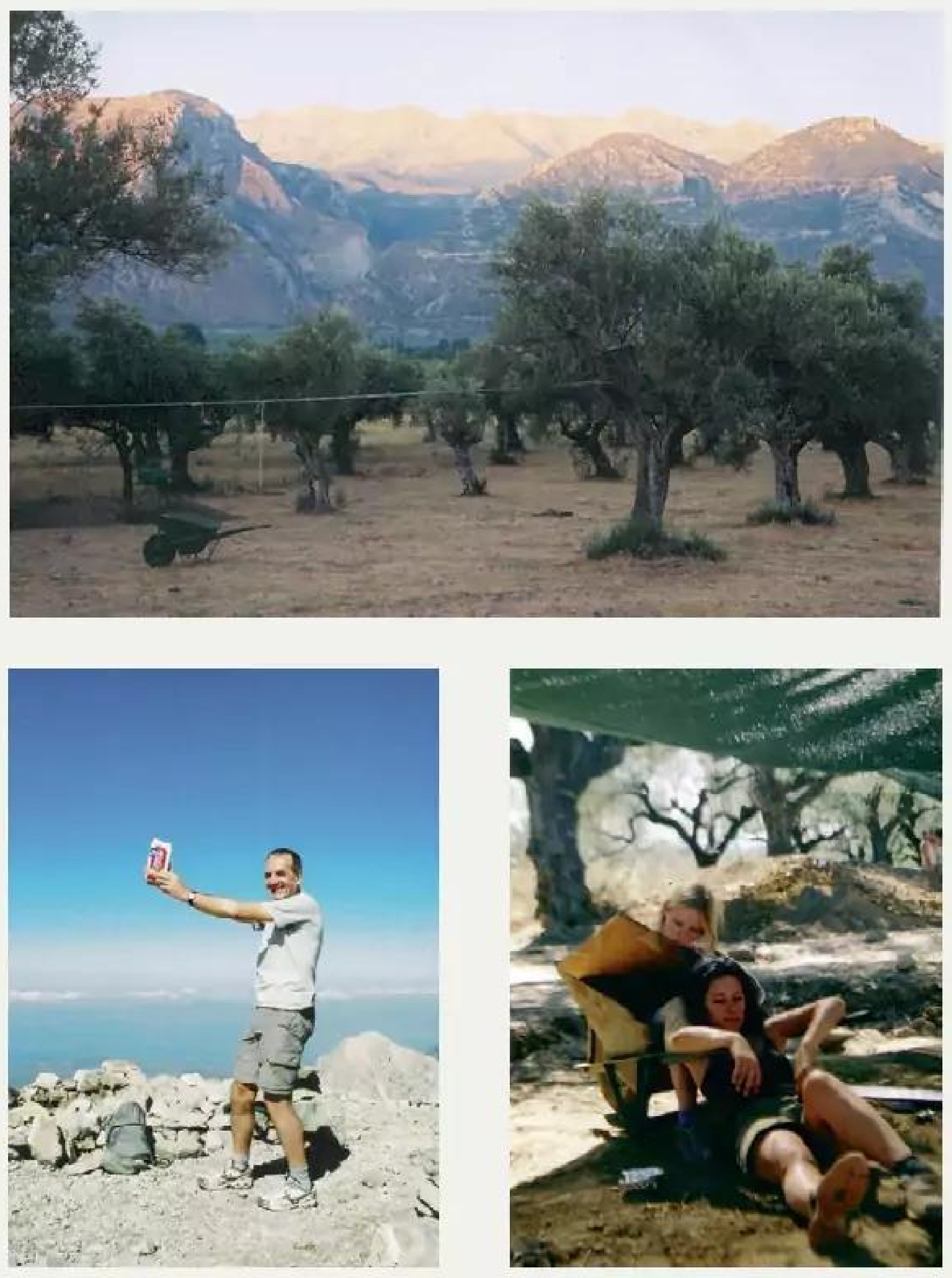
I remember one of my friends commenting that a certain hirsute lecturer wore a ‘helmet of hair’, and the phrase has stuck with me ever since. It still makes me giggle.

As a lecturer myself these days, I enjoy such memories, while remaining happy and steadfast in my ignorance of how my colleagues and I must appear to our own students.

We had to attend a talk about summer fieldwork options. I had already undertaken four weeks of digging and training at a site in the UK, and I was very keen for more hands-on experience. My tutor, Bill Cavanagh, was advertising five places on a project in Greece.

The site – by the name of Kouphovouno – was located near Sparta, but was far older even than that name, dating back to the Neolithic, the first flourishing of farming. In mainland Greece, this covers several millennia, roughly 9000 to 5000 years ago.

I wanted to get onto that project so badly. I knew, somehow, that it would be life-changing. I sent in my application, fingers crossed. What might have swung it for me was that I had a smattering of French, useful because the work was a collaboration between two Brits (Bill himself, and Chris Mee from the University of Liverpool), and a French scholar (Josette Rénard), along with their entourages.



This page: Clockwise from top: Kouphovouno with the mountains to the south 2003; The author and French colleague Marie, 2003; Chris Mee and his beloved bake rolls

DR CHLOË DUCKWORTH [3]

I was in one of the university’s many computing suites, filled with those large monitors of the late ’90s and early 2000s, when I got the email to say I had been accepted. I was so excited, I leapt out of my seat and yelled ‘yes!’

When I arrived at Kouphovouno, it was like stepping into a dream. The archaeology lies unobtrusively beneath an olive grove. I say ‘grove’ but truly, the whole Sparta plain is almost endless olive trees.

Apart from these, our view included the towering Tayegetos Mountains to the south. We would leave camp in the dark so we could be in the trenches at dawn, getting a head start on the work before our daily hit of throbbing, August heat.

As the sun rose and lit the mountains from the side with a pinkish glow, cicadas in the olive trees began to wake up, their screeches rising to a bloody chorus by the time of our mid-morning break. Sometimes we saw goats with bells around their necks, absurdly scrambling over the olives with limbs akimbo.

It was hard to believe that thousands of years ago this was the site of a wholly different agricultural settlement, though it became very apparent as soon as we touched mattock or trowel to the ground. The pottery sprang up from every square inch of the site: Hand-crafted and decorated in stunning designs, a symbol of communal feasting and neighbourly generosity.

The people who made these pots were unbelievably skilled, lovingly shaping, painting and firing them, quite literally in addition to their day jobs of food preparation and household maintenance (there were no full-time potters).

There were other finds, too – walls, stone tools, remains of seeds and more – but for me, the site will always be about the pottery. The pottery, and the people.

The reunion invitation was bittersweet to receive. My life in Greek archaeology is long over, but it was a part of my growing up, and Kouphovouno was the place it all started. We have lost some people, including Professor Chris Mee, who died too young.

My abiding memory of Chris is of our weekend hikes up the Tayegetos Mountains – those we could see from the site – through the green forests and villages with their icy cold freshwater springs, up to the naked rocky peaks, from which we could gaze down at the distant blue sea to the south.

I still have a photograph of Chris on top such a peak, sportingly holding aloft a packet of ‘mini bake rolls’, a much beloved salty snack indulged in by all project participants.

The archaeologist David Clarke once said, “archaeology is archaeology is archaeology”, and he was right in a way, because the point he was making is that it is truly its own discipline.

While I agree that archaeology is neither the handmaiden of history, nor a subset of anthropology, I hope Clarke would not mind a slight adjustment to his phrase: Archaeology is archaeology, is people.

When we are young, we do not recognise the significance of the moments of our lives, nor the power a particular place can hold in our memories, but the older I get, the more grateful I am for the opportunities I had back then, and the people – ancient and modern – who shaped them. ■

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